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A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 594. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 19TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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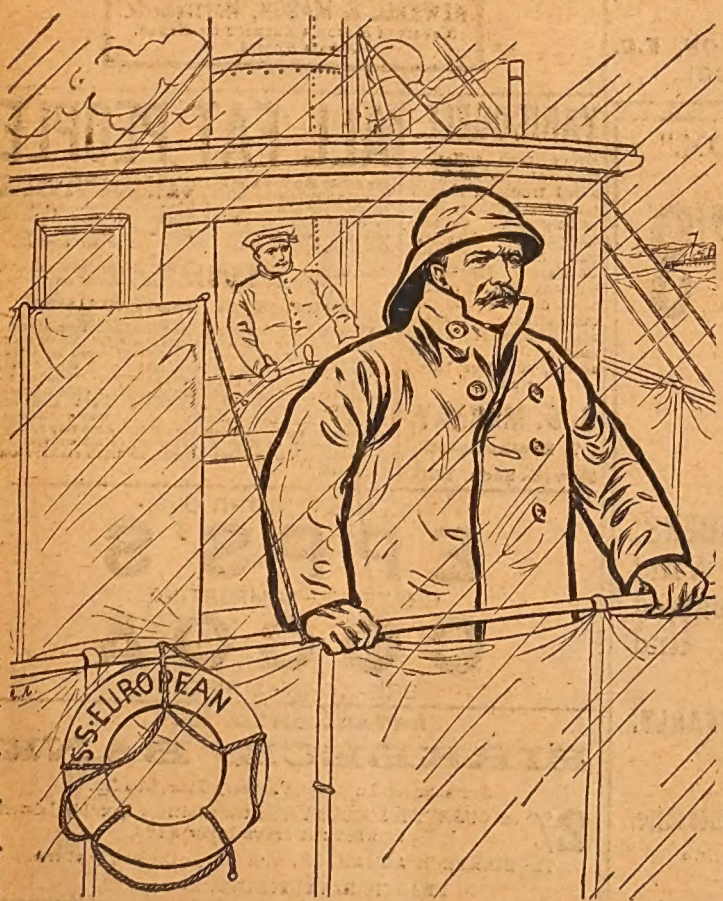

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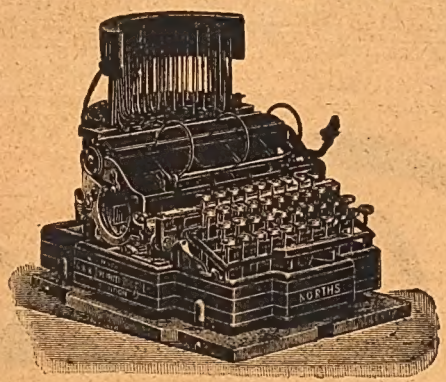

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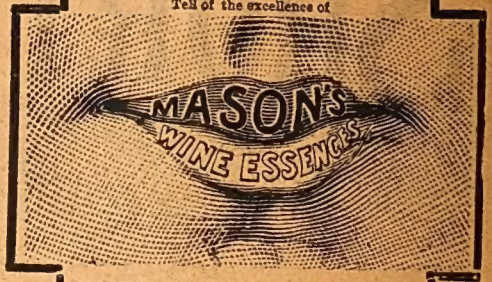

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THE RENEGADE

NIGHT was beginning to fall on the 23rd of December, 1880. Paul Sanders and his wife were seated by the wood fire in the larger of the two rooms of the homestead that was by courtesy called Sanders' Farm, situated four or five miles from Standerton, in the Transvaal territory. They had been sitting in silence for some minutes; it was now broken by Mrs. Sanders.

"There's trouble coming, I tell you," she said quietly. "We have already heard rumours that a Republic has been proclaimed and that the Boers intend to drive out the British. Which side are you going to take, Paul?"

Sanders raised his eyes from the fire to her face and then lowered them again without speaking.

"It's more than twenty years now since we left Natal," continued Mrs. Sanders in a tone that had a trace of sorrow and regret in it. "Yes, it's more than a score of years since Nance married the only man she ever cared a rap for and you turned your back on our only child because you did not think much of Roberts. You were a good man up to that time, but you began to go wrong from that moment. You turned your back on the British and we came into the Transvaal; and ever since then you've been gradually turning more and more into a Boer."

Still no reply came from her husband; he sat motionless, with scarcely a sign of life.

"It was only the memory of our younger days when we were so happy, and my love for you, which made me stick to you in spite of your turning a renegade and altering your name from Paul Saunders to Paulus Sanders. You're a weak-minded man, and if you hadn't had me by your side you would have been far worse than you are now—and, heaven knows, you're bad enough, Paul. You've stooped to thieving and lying, and some of the rascals about here have got you under their thumbs, but I don't believe you're so bad as to take up arms against your own countrymen. And that's what you've got to decide now."

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The woman did not seem to expect an answer this time, for she turned her face towards the fire and her thoughts wandered away to Natal. She had never seen her daughter after the latter's marriage; her husband had moved from one place to another in the Transvaal and Nance must have lost track of them, while Nance's address was unknown to her mother. Mrs. Sanders sighed deeply; she had been separated from her only child, and this separation, coupled with her husband's conduct, had made her life a joyless one.

The sound of hoofs upon the rough, half-formed road which passed within a few yards of the front of the house made both husband and wife look up quickly. The sound ceased opposite the house, and, with one accord, they went to the door and looked out.

A young fellow of about twenty years had just alighted from his horse and was making his way towards them. His left arm had apparently been hurt, for he was carrying it in a way that showed it had been injured.

"My horse is dead beat and so am I," he began in English, "and I want shelter for the night. Can you give me a bed for myself and some straw for my horse."

He glanced sharply at the couple and his face betrayed some anxiety. It was growing dark and he was unable to examine the faces before him as carefully as he wished. Had not Sanders and his wife been engrossed with other thoughts, they would have noticed the hesitation with which he made the request for shelter.

"We haven't got very comfortable quarters to offer anybody, but you're welcome to a rough bed in the loft, and there's some sort of a stable at the back that will do for your horse," returned Mrs. Sanders before her husband could speak. This young fellow was English and her heart went out to him.

"Thank you," said the newcomer heartily. He was relieved to find that he had halted at a house tenanted by one of his own people and not by a Dutchman. "I can pay for the accommodation. Will you tell me which way to lead my horse to the stable?"

"I'll show you," answered the man. And he led the way to the back of the house followed by the young fellow leading his horse.

"That's a good bit of horseflesh you've got there," remarked Sanders as they left the stable, "and you seem to have made good use of it. Been riding hard?"

"Yes. You're British, I can see, and I'll tell you all about it when we get inside. You're not the only man who has admired that horse to-day. Oh! You knocked my bad arm; I had a Boer bullet through it three days ago."

Sanders started, but his unexpected guest did not notice it. When they entered the house, the young

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fellow found that Mrs. Sanders had prepared supper of a kind and he was decidedly grateful.

"I haven't had a mouthful of anything since this time yesterday," he remarked as he seated himself at the rough wooden table, "and I'm dreadfully hungry. You must excuse me if I use my fingers now and then, as my left arm is not of much service to me just now."

"What's the matter with it?" asked Mrs. Sanders, drawing nearer to him.

"Well, I'll tell you all about it in a few words," returned her guest.

"I've been in Pretoria for a couple of months, and two or three weeks ago I heard rumours that the Boers were going to kick against British rule and set up a Republic on their own account. I kept my ears open, and then—it's a week ago—I heard that a Republic had been proclaimed. I began to look about me and to make ready for clearing out and getting back to Natal, and then I learnt that the Boers had decided to make an attack on some of our soldiers who were bringing a convoy from Lydenberg to Pretoria."

He was eating and talking at the same time, so he did not notice the glances exchanged by Sanders and his wife. After a pause he went on with his story.

"I made up my mind, to upset that little game if I could, so I got out of Pretoria and rode off to meet Colonel Anstruther and his men and warn them of the intended attack; but I reached Brunkers Spruit just as the Boers attacked 250 men of the 94th. There was a big fight and I did what I could to help the soldiers, but we were outnumbered. That's how I came to get a bullet through my arm.

"When the fight was over and I found that I could do no more good, I made a bolt for it and got away so as to take the news to Newcastle or some other place where I could warn our people of what was going on and get them to send troops to assist. I have had to keep my eyes open during those three days since the fight, and I haven't been able to come straight here. Why, only four hours ago I was chased by seven or eight Boers who took a fancy to my horse and rifle! In trying to get away from them I lost my rifle, but I managed to escape. Nearly lost my money, too."

"Money!" echoed Sanders, an evil light shining in his eyes. "And you haven't been able to take the news to—to the British yet?"

"Not yet, of course," was the reply. "I tell you, I was half afraid to stop here; I thought you were certain to be Dutch, but I thought I would trust to the chance that you would not know what was happening. But I was done up and bound to get shelter somewhere. Thank goodness you are British and I shall be safe for to-night."

"But what about your money?" asked Sanders.

"By some accident—I don't know how—I pulled out the bag containing my money which I had collected at Pretoria and dropped it on the ground. I had to pull up and jump off my horse to pick it up; I ran some risk of being shot by doing that, but I couldn't bear the thought of my hard-earned gold going into the pockets of those Boer rascals. I lost some of the coins, but that was better than losing all. They pursued me hotly after that little incident, still, I managed to leave them a long way behind."

"You have no firearms?" interrogated Mrs. Sanders; and on receiving a negative reply, she continued: "You had better take this; it is fully loaded. You don't know what dangers you may have to face, even here."

A young fellow had just alighted from his horse.

This was a six-chambered revolver which she took from a shelf and handed to the young man. He did not understand the significant ring in her voice as she uttered the last word; her husband did, however, and he shifted uneasily. Then she asked him if he could describe any members of the little band that had attacked him in the afternoon. A description of the leader was readily given, and again Mrs. Sanders glanced meaningly at her husband.

"If you don't mind," said the wounded man politely, "I should like to retire; I feel as though I wanted some sticks to prop up my eyelids."

"Come this way," said Nance's mother. She was getting on in years now, but she looked as strong and her tread was as firm as if she were at least twenty years younger. She passed into the back room followed by the fugitive, and stopped at the foot of a ladder leading to the loft.

"If I were you," she whispered close to his ear, "I would keep that revolver close at hand and try not to sleep too soundly. There is danger even here for one who has money and is trying to warn the British of the trouble that is rising in the Transvaal."

"So Dick is not out of the wood yet!" exclaimed the young fellow when he had recovered from the astonishment caused by the woman's warning. "I thought you were——"

"You get up to bed and be careful!" was all the answer vouchsafed to him

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He ascended the ladder and disappeared in the loft, while the woman returned to her husband who was standing against the fire.

"Paul Saunders," said his wife looking him fairly in the face and speaking in her usual calm manner, "you have now arrived at a point on the road of life where you have to choose one of two ways. You must either side wholly with the enemies of your country—which means becoming entirely a traitor instead of being only partly a renegade—or you must throw in your lot with your natural friends, those whom you have scorned for a score of years. I know the men who attacked that boy; so do you. We both know that they will track him to his death. And I know that he is not safe even from you! I have been patient with you through all your misdeeds; it was my duty as your wife; but if you go with the Boers, or attempt to harm that boy, I leave you!"

"Why did you give him that revolver?" Paul demanded, feebly trying to evade the issue by asking a question.

"So that he might defend himself from everyone!"

"He's safe enough. I'm going to bed." And he shuffled into the back room and undressed.

His wife went to the door, opened it, and looked out to the right and left.

The night was bleak and cold, and rain was beginning to fall; there was every appearance of a heavy storm before many hours had passed. She strained her eyes in an endeavour to see if anyone was about, but there was no sign of human life, and she returned to the room, barring the door behind her.

"If I were you I would keep that revolver close at hand."

She took down a gun from the wall and loaded it carefully; she had known what it was to be in danger of her life when she and her husband had lived for two years near the Zululand border, and she had learnt how to handle a gun; even in her present abode she had found it wise not to be without weapons and ammunition. Her task completed, she retired to rest, keeping the gun close to her hand.

The hours passed and midnight came, but Mary Saunders did not sleep; her eyes were closed and her breathing was heavy and regular, so that her husband—who also lay awake—smiled grimly as he awaited the opportune moment.

Stealthily the man sat up in bed and looked searchingly into his wife's face by the light of a feeble candle which she had left burning; then, satisfied that she was sleeping, he slipped from the bed and dressed himself.

"I'll put them on the track," he muttered to himself, "then she can't say that I did it. I can have my share of the money, and perhaps I can stick to the horse. Anyhow, if they ever came to know that I had given shelter to a man who had fought against them and was hurrying away to bring up reinforcements—if they ever came to know that I had had him here and then let him go—my life wouldn't be safe for a minute. And as to going back to Natal to be a British subject again ——." An oath finished the sentence.

He stepped softly into the front room, unbarred the door and stole out into the night. Scarcely had he left the house than his wife rose, hurriedly dressed herself and ascended the ladder.

"Wake up!" she enjoined, shaking the sleeping Dick.

In an instant he was on his feet, revolver in hand. He had not undressed, and was ready for any emergency. He levelled the revolver at the woman and asked:

"Who is it? What is the matter?"

"Your life is in danger, my boy!" she replied quickly. "You must leave the house at once: you have had a rest and your horse too, will be refreshed, so you can get away at a good rate. The men who attacked you yesterday afternoon have hunted you down, but I can guide you to another road which lies at the back of a farm and you can get away. They will never think that you have escaped in that direction. Quick, there is no time to lose."

"I don't like this running away!" exclaimed Dick. "I prefer to fight it out."

"Silly boy! What can you do against six or eight? And you have an errand to perform which is of far more importance than fighting half a dozen men. Come with me, and get away at once. This thunderstorm is in your favour."

She was right; the earth seemed to be shaken by heavy claps of thunder, while brilliant flashes of lightning illuminated the sky at intervals. The noise of the rain and the thunder would help him to get away, and though the lightning flashes might reveal his presence, yet he would be hidden for some miles by the natural unevenness of the ground from the sight of those who might be looking for him round about the house or on the main road.

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They descended into the back room and were crossing to the back door, when they heard a step in the other apartment and Paul Saunders stood facing them.

"Have you brought them here to kill this boy?"

The words came sternly from the woman's lips, as she confronted her husband with the rifle gripped firmly by both hands.

"Paul, there will come a day when you will have to answer for this to a greater power than any on earth? You will have to answer for turning traitor to your own countrymen, for killing and robbing! What will your answer be? You have not yet committed the crime of murder; stop while you are yet on the brink of it!"

A vivid flash of lightning illumined the room as she finished speaking. Paul saw the young man, his revolver tightly grasped and his face wearing a look of the greatest determination; he saw his wife, the woman who had brought him happiness in the past and had stood nobly by him despite his failings. He gazed at the figure that stood before him like a warning angel—nay, like a pitying angel who would save him from himself even now. The flash of lightning seemed like a message from Heaven from out of which came the words that would bring him to a sense of his position. For a moment a strange thrill went through him and he shook in every limb; then there came one of those strange inexplicable revulsions of feeling that send a man from one extreme to the other.

"By Heaven, they shall not have him!" The fierceness of the exclamation startled the hearers. Before they fairly realised the change that had taken place within Paul Saunders, he had rushed to the front door and barred it and was making preparations which could only mean that he intended to defend his house against all comers.

In a moment all three were busy. Not a word was spoken, but each one set to work in different ways to secure the house from attack. Then they waited for the enemy.

Half a dozen men came to the front door, expecting that it would yield to a touch; when they found that it was secured, there were loud cries to the inmates to open or take the consequences.

For an answer Saunders thrust the muzzle of his rifle through an opening in the shutter that protected the window on the inside and threatened to shoot.

Howls of rage, strengthened by oaths, followed this announcement; the Boers hesitated for a while and slunk out of range, but they were bent on getting inside and suddenly made a desperate rush at the door.

The old house was not built to withstand such treatment, and the door came off at the hinges. The next moment six or seven men rushed into the room, three or four of them firing wildly.

Saunders thrust the muzzle of his rifle through an opening in the shutter.

Two shots rang out simultaneously and two of the intruders fell to the ground. The others were daunted for a moment by this reception; they could not see well enough to find out how many were opposing them. Their rage, however, overcame their discretion and they dashed forward to the attack, using the butt ends of their rifles.

The fight was fierce, but of short duration. There were seven of the intruders in all, and the five who were uninjured precipitated themselves upon the defenders with the idea of overpowering them by the sheer force of the impact. Dick fired his revolver and dropped another man who was bearing down upon Mrs. Saunders; then he heard her fall, and he and Saunders were fighting side by side with their backs to the wall against four men. Saunders was using his rifle as a club, while Dick was defending himself with a stout piece of wood, used for barring the back door, his revolver in his left hand.

The case seemed pretty desperate, and the attacking party were evidently of that opinion, for the leader uttered a grim chuckle and urged his fellows to make short work of the man and the boy. Saunders clenched his teeth when he knew that his wife had fallen; love for his wife could hardly be said to have shown itself very prominently of late years, but, whether he cared for her or not, the thought that she had been felled

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to the ground by the men who were now doing their best to kill him, enraged him almost beyond himself.

"Come on!" he hissed between his clenched teeth. "I've a score to pay, and I mean to pay it. Stand firm, boy! See that they don't get round you, and let them know that they have men to fight, not women!"

"I'm ready!" was all that Dick replied. The sight of the woman lying still on the floor, senseless, to all appearance dead, made his blood boil.

Mary Saunders had all a woman's wit and she had played a trick that had once served her well in a struggle with Zulus; she had dropped to the ground with a purpose, and now that the four men were busy with her husband and Dick, she arose quietly, her hands tightly clenched round the barrel of the rifle.

The first intimation the invaders had of her little scheme was the felling of one of their number by a blow from the butt of the rifle. Disconcerted by this unexpected attack, the remaining three turned and retreated to the door; a shot from Dick's revolver, which, however, missed its mark, and a rush forward of the three defenders settled the question and they fled from the place pursued for some distance by Dick.

When the young man returned he found Mrs. Saunders attending to her prostrate husband—he had been wounded by a shot at the beginning of the struggle—but he had kept up until the flight of the three men, when he had fallen to the ground, weakened by loss of blood. He dragged the bodies of the wounded Boers into the back room, where several lights were now burning, and examined their wounds; two were dead, but the others were not very seriously injured, although incapacitated. While Mrs. Saunders was attending to her husband, he roughly dressed the wounds of the two assailants and then turned to his hostess to see what further was to be done.

"He is not badly hurt," replied Mary Saunders in answer to Dick's inquiry. "But we must get away from here; it will be death to us now if we remain in this house. Can you help me to inspan the waggon and put some food in it, so that we can all set out for a place of safety? I don't know where we shall go or what we shall do when we get there, for we shall have to leave everything behind us and we have no friends among the Colonists."

"If we ever get over the Natal border, you'll be all right," Dick assured her heartily. "My father is James Roberts, and if you know anything of Natal you will understand that he is somebody. And my mother will never leave off blessing you for saving her boy. Look!" he continued, drawing a portrait from an inside pocket. "This is her portrait; you can see she's a sweet woman and—Why, what on earth's the matter?"

"Is that your mother?" almost screamed the woman as she snatched the portrait from his hand. "It's Nance! Paul, Paul, this boy is our grandson! He is Nance's boy!"

* * * * *

They had not gone far on the road to Newcastle when they fell in with a friendly party that took care of Mr. and Mrs. Saunders and the waggon, while Dick Roberts pushed on ahead to take the news of the Boer Rebellion. They all reached the Natal border in safety and ere many hours had passed, Mary Saunders was clasped in her daughter's arms.

G. DAY.

NO FAITH IN THERMOMETERS.

AFTER Mrs. Willoughby had engaged her new man-about-the-house to do the heavy work and look after the furnace—for she had her house warmed with hot-water pipes—she found that it was necessary to instruct him carefully in his duties.

One of his lessons consisted in the use of the thermometer to indicate the temperature of the house. Michael knew nothing whatever about thermometers, and the instruction naturally took the form of a complete course, beginning with a description of the way in which the instrument did its work.

"You see this fine line of mercury in the glass tube, Michael?"

"Oi do, mum."

"Well, when it's warm the mercury goes up, and when it's cold the mercury goes down. Do you understand that, Michael?"

"Oi do, mum."

"Very well. Now, I want to keep the house as nearly as I can at 70 degrees, Michael."

"Sivinty degrays, is it, mum?"

"Yes, Michael. Look at this thermometer, and you will see that the mercury now just touches 65 degrees. That shows that the house is not warm enough, and you must fire up the furnace a little. Do you understand?"

"Oi do, mum."

"And if the mercury goes up to seventy-five or eighty, the house is then too warm, and you must let the fire in the furnace slacken down a little, or let some cold outside air into the house by opening the window in the hall just a little way, and being careful to close it the minute the thermometer gets down to seventy. Now, do do you think I can trust you to look after the temperature carefully?"

"The timperature, mum?"

"Yes; the heat and cold of the house, you know."

"Indade you can, mum."

Mrs. Willoughby went about her social duties, and late in the afternoon returned home. Her first look was at the thermometer. It indicated 69 degrees, and she congratulated herself that Michael was doing his work well. Michael himself had misgivings, however, not about the manner of his work, but of the reliability of the thermometer as an indicator of temperature. Mrs. Willoughby saw him go outside, and then come back and gaze at the thermometer in the hall with a troubled expression of countenance.

"Is anything the matter, Michael?" she asked.

Michael shook his head.

"Sure, mum," he replied, "it's mesilf as is afraid thim thermometers is no good."

"What makes you think that, Michael?"

"Well, mum, thot one in the hall points to sivinty, whoile the one out on the porch says only thirty-foive. Which av them am Oi to belave?"

E. T.

HE: "What are you two girls talking about?"
She: "Nothing; are your ears burning?"

A SIMPLE village worthy, of mature years, not long ago went to the village shop to buy candles, and was astonished to find that, owing to the war, "candles was riz."

"Get along," she exclaimed, indignantly. "Don't tell me they fight by candle-light!"

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My Lady's Lesson.

MISTRESS BEATRICE RITTERIL pulled up her tired and dro ping steed at an inn on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Accompanied by her servants, and with a bodyguard provided by King William, she had ridden in hot haste, with little thought to the fretting of the horses, from the court at Bristol, to meet her Jacobite lover, Richmond Dordrey.

Although she had been at much pains to obtain his pardon, which she carried in her dress, and which she had begged for on her knees from the King, yet she was unworthy of her gallant lover, who did not know her very doubtful reputation at the court. On her journey from the south she had bethought herself of a plan whereby she would make trial of Richmond's love.

Kind treatment to a horse is dear to a soldier's heart, and the lieutenant of her guard liked not this proud and haughty lady, who cruelly used her whip, and had treated him and others on the road with scant courtesy.

But, ever polite, and mindful of his duty in the King's service, he vaulted from his saddle, and throwing the reins to one of his men, assisted her to alight.

"You have my rooms ready?" she inquired of the unctuous landlord, who was bowing at the entrance of the inn.

"Aye, my lady."

The lieutenant would have mounted his horse, for he and his troop were riding on to Edinburgh, but she beckoned to him.

"I would like a word with you, lieutenant, ere you depart."

He assented, and followed her into the large parlour of the inn.

"Conduct my servants to their apartments," she said to the innkeeper. "I would speak with the officer alone."

"Sir, I would ask a favour of you." He bowed.

"Madame, 'tis the king's order, and 'tis granted," said he, curtly, for he bore her little good will.

"Nay, do not be so severe," she said, as she noticed his ungracious manner, "I like not the fashion of your answer. I want you to do this favour for me."

And Mistress Beatrice smiled at him. She could smile sweetly when she liked, and rarely could she not bring men to her feet, if she willed. The lieutenant found it hard not to smile also.

"Ah! I see you will do it," she continued coyly. "Then at nine o'clock, this evening, ride here with your men, and enter this room, as if travellers wanting refreshment. You will find me here, but pretend not to know me. After a short space, as if excited with wine, put your arm round my waist, and kiss me. There, lieutenant," and she looked shyly at him, as she dug the toe of her dainty shoe in a rut of the wooden floor, "I hope you do not find the task unpleasant."

He would have been unworthy of the traditions of the King's Guard if he had done so, for she was a very handsome woman.

"Madame, I shall be delighted to grant the favour," said he with a gallant bow, "but may I ask——"

"Ah! I see you are inquisitive," she broke in, "but more I cannot tell you."

"But doubtless, Madame, there are other persons concerned in the comedy; my position may be dangerous."

"Fie, sir! You are not afraid?"

The lieutenant put his hand on his sword-hilt, and stepped towards the door with a laugh.

"Madame, I am of the King's Bodyguard, and you know their reputation—I will be here at nine."

But a new thought seemed to strike him.

"You doubtless will pr vide a limit to the kissing," said he, "for maybe I might not be able to tell whether your reluctance was real or feigned."

She blushed at the sally.

"You may safely leave that to me," she answered, "for though my hand is small, it can hit hard."

The officer opened the door.

"Madame," said he, smiling, "at nine this even, you will see a soldier make love to a pretty lady."

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"'Tis a pretty way of putting it," she said, with a curtsey. "But lieutenant, what would you do if you saw an enemy of the King?"

"Madame, I should arrest him, or I should kill him," the soldier replied as he tapped the hilt of his sword.

"Then do not forget, for to-day, to arrest, rather than kill!"

"I will remember."

And with a graceful bow he passed out of the room, and in a few moments was riding with his troops to Edinburgh, wondering much on the strange ways of women.

"'Twill be an excellent comedy," mused Mistress Beatrice, when the lieutenant had gone. "Richmond will come, and I will pretend not to have obtained the pardon. When the soldiers arrive, he will hide—where? Ah! that curtain will do well. The lieutenant will insult me, and then if Richmond really loves me, and values me more than his life, he will come forward and be arrested—if not——" and she shrugged her pretty shoulders with a laugh, "I doubt, whether I will take the pardon back to the King."

She laid her plans carefully, arranging with the landlord that any other travellers, save the lieutenant and his troop, should be served in another room.

In the evening her lover came.

He was, in truth, a handsome gentleman, and though the watchfulness required by an outlaw had marked itself by the lines of care on his brow and his clothes were faded, yet his face was not robbed of its beauty, nor his body of its graceful bearing.

"Ah! Beatrice," he said, as he clasped her in his arms, "how I am glad to be with you. See! I have brought you a present—a spray of heliotrope; 'tis the emblem of my devotion to you. I stole them from a cottager's garden this morning—Heaven will forgive the theft."

She took the flowers from him, and slowly repeated the words, "The emblem of thy devotion to me."

But her eyes did not meet his.

She put the flowers in her bosom.

"But you are pale," said her lover. "Your sweet face had almost made me forget. Have you not got the pardon?"

"No," said Beatrice, "the King would not hear me." As she said this, the heliotrope fell unnoticed from her dress. There was silence, only broken by the sound of horses hoofs in the distance. As Beatrice heard them, she put her foot unknowingly on the fallen flowers.

"Oh, look!" said Richmond. "What a pity! you have crushed the flowers."

The horsemen had stopped in the courtyard.

Beatrice rushed to the window.

"See! they are soldiers, and and are coming this way. Quick! You must hide behind this curtain."

Dordrey obeyed. Beatrice took up a book, and, sitting at one end of the long table, began to read.

The innkeeper and the soldiers entered.

The comedy had commenced!

"Landlord, bring us wine," said the lieutenant, "and let it be your best."

Taking their seats at the table, for ten minutes or so, they drank their wine, talking among themselves, with seemingly no thought to the lady. But their leader seemed to grow merry as he drank, and eventually, filling his glass, rose from his seat.

"Come, my men," said he, "fill your glasses and let us drink the health of the King before we ride on. Perhaps madame will join us in our toast to His Majesty." And he leered at Mistress Beatrice.

"Keep your tongue civil, sir," said she, "lest I call the innkeeper."

The lieutenant seemed for the moment to take little heed to the rebuff.

"Gentlemen," continued he, "we must drink the toast alone. The health of His Majesty, King William!" And they drained their glasses.

"As the pretty lady would not drink to the king, she must pay the forfeit," smirked the lieutenant, and reeling over to Mistress Beatrice, clasped her round the waist, and played his part in the comedy by two smacking kisses.

Richmond Dordrey leapt from his hiding place, and drawing his sword, faced the lieutenant.

"Thou coward," said he, "to insult a lady, I will wipe off those kisses on my sword."

The soldiers were dumfounded, and the words "Outlaw" and "Dordrey" were on their lips.

"Richmond Dordrey, hand me your weapon," said the lieutenant, "I arrest thee in the name of King William."

"Nay! Lieutenant! There is the king's pardon!" And Mistress Beatrice flung a roll of parchment at the officer's feet.

"Richmond, be not angry with this gentleman, he did but kiss me at my request. 'Twas but to try you." And she would have flung herself on her lover's breast.

But he stepped back, avoiding her, and Beatrice, as she looked pleadingly at him, noticed that the light of love had faded from his eyes.

"Lieutenant, I crave your pardon," he said, and taking the parchment from the officer, he tore it across, and dropped the pieces on the floor.

"There, Madame, is your pardon. You may take its fragments back to the King, for I will have none of it, and I would have you learn, that a Dordrey's love needs not to be tested. Lieutenant! I am your prisoner."

And he drew his sword and offered it to the officer.

But he would not accept it.

"That is the King's pardon," and he pointed to the floor, "and now I cannot arrest thee."

Richmond, at first seemed nonplussed, but after a moment his face brightened and he turned to Mistress Beatrice.

"Madame, I accept the pardon," said he.

Then he stepped to the table, and pouring out a glass of wine, called out, in a loud and happy voice:

"Long live King James! The King across the water!" and draining the glass, smashed it on the floor.

The sword of every soldier in the room flew from its scabbard, as if from custom, as they heard the words. But the officer sheathed his again.

"Though you are a traitor to utter such, yet will I not do my duty, for I like not to have played a part in what has become a plot."

"Lieutenant, I am grateful to you," said Richmond. "Mistress Beatrice Ritteril, I loved thee as well, and as honestly as a man can, but I care not for a lady who doubts my love. I will die fighting for King James." And with these words, the outlaw passed out into the night.

The lieutenant stood still, and was silent.

The rejected lady looked ashamed, and her lips were bloodless. She had learnt a lesson.

"Will you sup with me, Lieutenant?" she said.

"Madame, unless 'tis the King's command, I would rather be excused."

Mistress Beatrice Ritteril supped alone.

FREDERICK FARRENCE.

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Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

VI.—HE WOULD HAVE PASSED A PLEASANT EVENING BUT FOR A BUTCHER'S BILL.

MR. BOWSER was due at home at six o'clock, and Mrs. Bowser was wondering what sort of a new fad he would bring home with him when he suddenly opened the door. As he didn't give the door a kick and a bang when he opened it, she knew that he hadn't had a row with the bus conductor *en route*. As he was humming a tune to himself, she knew that he hadn't found a pin or a shirt button on the steps and would bring no charge of reckless extravagance against her.

"Ha, little woman, but here you are!" he exclaimed as he caught sight of her. "Dinner's all ready, of course? You never keep me waiting, and you always have something good. I never come home without patting myself on the back over my good luck. Everything gone all right with you to-day?"

It wasn't an extra good dinner. The butcher had sent a poor joint, and the cook had had trouble with the fire, but as Mr. Bowser plied his knife and fork he complimented everything. He also complimented Mrs. Bowser on her personal appearance and the cook on her culinary skill. Mrs. Bowser was glad to see him in such good spirits, and yet she was uneasy. As dinner was ended she almost hoped to hear him say he was going to the club for an hour or two. He had no such idea in his head, however. As he reached the sitting room he took off his shoes, lighted a cigar and dropped into a chair with the observation:

"Ah, there's the cat!"

"Well, this is home! This is the way for a man to live! A man who has a home like this ought to be kicked for complaining about anything. Did I leave you any money this morning?"

"I—I think not," she replied.

"Then I must have forgotten it. I meant to have left you a five pound note. Just remind me of it to-morrow, will you? By George, but how neat and cosy this room looks! We might have a little more light, though."

"I'm trying to keep the gas bills down, you know."

"Never you mind the gas bills, little one," he said as he rose and lighted all the burners. "You are naturally saving, but there's no need of pinching. Just use all the gas you want to and don't be scraping with the coal. Didn't I see you fixing up an old dress the other evening?"

"I was altering it over in hopes to make it do," she explained.

"Well, throw it away and go to town and get a new one. I want to see you well dressed, and there's no need to alter old garments. Go to the best dressmaker and have the latest style."

"You are awfully kind and good!" she murmured as she forgot the peril of the situation for a moment.

"No thanks, please. You deserve all I can do for you. If there's a better little wife in all this big world, I'd like to hear of her. The trouble is that I don't half appreciate you. Only the other day I was thinking things over, and I realised to the fullest extent that but for your influence I should never have been the man I am. I've made blunders enough, Heaven knows, but if it hadn't been for you I should have made hundreds more. Just think of the tomfool fads I have indulged in, will you?"

"They weren't so very foolish," she protested.

"You say that to let me down easy, but I realise how often I have made an ass of myself. Ah, there's the cat! Kitty, kitty, kitty!"

The cat came out from under the sofa and sprang to Mr. Bowser's knees and he stroked her back and toyed with her ears and said:

"Just a cosy little family, aren't we? Do you remember that one night about two weeks ago we differed as how to spell the word 'waggon?' I said there was only one 'g' in it, and you said there were two. I want to ask your forgiveness. Of course you were right."

"There's nothing to forgive," replied Mrs. Bowser. "People are often mistaken about a word."

"But I got mad and called you an idiot. I wish some one had been at hand to kick me. About that last coal bill—I said we had burned a ton a week and jumped up

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and down, and it's a wonder you kept your temper as you did. Please forgive me for that."

"You thought you were right."

"Yes, but I made a fool of myself, as I had a hundred times before. Even if we had used a ton a week you couldn't help it. You don't make the weather. If there was ever a wife who looked after things about the house with a determination to help her husband, it is you. I don't believe sixpenny worth of stuff is wasted in a year."

"I try to do my best," she responded, but at the same time wishing that Jones or Brown would come in and interrupt the conversation.

"Do you remember the night I came home and found a pin on the doorstep?" continued Mr. Bowser, with evident enjoyment. "I rushed into the hall and made as much fuss over that little pin as if it had been a diamond spray. I stamped about and shouted and spoiled the whole evening. Mrs. Bowler, why didn't you bristle up to me and tell me to shut right up or you'd leave? If you had hit me with a crowbar that night, it would have served me right. Have you—can you ever forgive me?"

"There was a strange man here this afternoon," she said determined to break up the conversation at all hazards, "and I think he wanted to see you about land."

"Well, let him come when I'm home. I believe you told me not long ago that you had saved all my old love letters. Suppose you get 'em all down, and we'll read 'em over."

"I—I don't think I could find them to-night. Shall we run into Brown's for an hour?"

"I'm too comfortable to go out. Wasn't it funny about my trying that barefoot cure? When a man starts to make a fool of himself the way I do every little while, somebody ought to take a club to him. If I bring a cricket bat home, will you whack me with it the first time I act like an idiot?"

Mrs. Bowser was about to make an excuse to leave the room when the cook came up with a bill. It was for a balance of one shilling and threepence owing the butcher.

Mr. Bowser was smiling all over as she handed it to him, but no sooner had he glanced over it than a thundercloud took the place of his smile, and he shouted:

"What's this? What's this? You've been running in debt again!"

"The butcher hadn't change of a five shilling piece," explained Mrs. Bowser.

"Debts, debts, debts!" exclaimed Mr. Bowser as he flung the cat half way across the room and jumped up and swung his arms in the air. "Woman, haven't I warned you a million times about this reckless extravagance? If I gave you five hundred pounds a week to run this house on, you'd still be in debt! Of all the extravagant, reckless spendthrifts I ever saw you are the worst!"

"Haven't I warned you a million times about this reckless extravagance."

"But it wasn't running in debt. I had a five shilling piece, and the man hadn't enough change. I expected to pay it to-morrow."

"What's to-morrow got to do with it? I tell you not to run in debt, and you defy me. I'm looking at the principle of the thing. Mrs. Bowser, this is too much—too much!"

"You are getting excited over nothing," she replied. "We had to have meat, and the butcher boy hadn't the change."

"Wreck, ruin and the workhouse!" he groaned as he walked about. "It's no wonder I'm old and bent and grey before my time. Thousands of pins on the front steps, tons of broken dishes in the back yard—waste and extravagance everywhere! And you sit there—you sit there and smile over it! Woman, I won't stand it! I am about to retire to the library. I desire to arrange my business affairs and see if I've got a sixpence left. While I am doing so you can break up the chairs, smash the piano and kick holes in the carpet. Good night, madam!"

And when he had gone the cat came over and sat down beside Mrs. Bowser and looked up into her face and smiled with her.

M. QUAD.

Next Week: HE PREPARES A SURPRISE AND SUFFERS A DISAPPOINTMENT.

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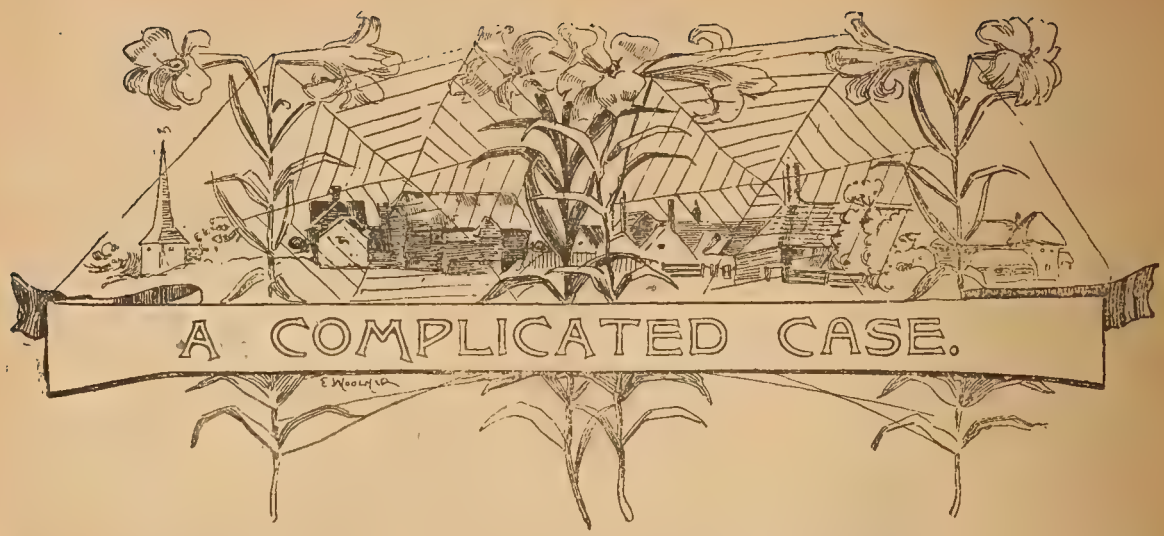

RALPH MORRISON had been running through his letters in his usual rapid and business-like manner, until the sight of an untidily addressed envelope made him give a low whistle and look decidedly blue. He read the contents, and his brow remained uncleared. The epistle sounded quite cheerful, from a client, too; he re-read it.

MY DEAR MR. MORRISON,—I want you to take up a case for me, will you? You always agree, the way people send unasked-for contributions to papers, and expect them returned, is preposterous; well now, I have mislaid two stories (quite rubbish from a beginner), and she worries my life out to return them, and at last threatens to go to law, so, for an example, I want to allow her to take up my case; you always promised to help me, and besides you procured me this position; knowing this and your kindness, I am sure you will help me.

Very sincerely yours.

EVE DICEY.

"Shall I never be able to shake her off? 'My dear Mr. Morrison; very sincerely yours,' gush! I procured her the position, I did, offices opposite; why? because I was a fool. This is a prelude, she will be here in a moment."

A word escaped Ralph Morrison, a word too shocking to print.

"It was the mildest flirtation, she was so jolly good looking, stupid, refreshingly stupid for a bit (stupidity does pall though), then she came to me to settle her affairs after her husband's death, looked so bewitching in weeds, wept, tears always melt me, thought it so safe too, a woman so cut up for her first husband couldn't be on the look-out for a second, women are so complex though one never knows. Then she was poor. Suddenly unprotected, wanting work, love was dead, she wanted work. I remember she talked much, touching all of it. Through knowing Holmes I procured her a post as editress of his latest paper, offices opposite, accidental but charming—at first."

The telephone roused him.

"Hullo, are you there?"

"Yes."

"Ralph Morrison?"

"The same. Hullo! Field, is that you?"

"I say, will you come round and dine with me to-night? The wife asked me to ring you up, quite friendly, pot luck."

"Pleasure, with you 7.30."

After this little episode, Morrison felt in a better frame of mind, he liked the daughter, Winifred Field, he liked her so much that he was half inclined to confer a great honour on her. She was not rich, but clever, pretty, bright, piquant, and had nearly as good an opinion of him, as he had of himself; in fact there was no knowing what happiness the fates had in store for Winifred Field.

"Jove! what could I have seen in Eve Dicey!"

And he settled himself down to write a polite refusal to her on account of pressure of business.

He had scarcely commenced when his office boy, with a broad but unconcealed grin, handed him a card.

"Send the lady up."

He felt anything but pleased to see Mrs. Dicey, and it was with an absence of cordiality that he shook hands and motioned her to sit down. Mrs. Dicey looked charming, she had discarded her weeds, and returned to her smiles.

"It is a year to-day," she said with apparent irreverence, but Morrison, with a glance at her toque, guessed to what she alluded. "You are busy, but I knew you would not grudge me a moment, dear Mr. Morrison."

"My dear Mrs. Dicey."

"Mrs. Dicey! Why? have I offended you?"

"Eve, my dear Eve," with a slight cough.

"That's better, you always have called me Eve, haven't you? and now, I think I might call you Ralph; I shan't though,"—an exclamation of relief from Morrison—"I shall call you Alf, I like it better."

Ralph Morrison looked decidedly uncomfortable, if Eve Dicey called him Alf, she would write to him as Alf. He had not been a solicitor all these years for nothing. He began to expostulate, but in vain.

"Now, Mr. Morrison, Alf I mean, it feels so funny at first, you are going to help me, just take up this one case for me, do, you will, of course you will."

He looked at her gravely, coldly. "Really I am"—but she smiled at him a bewitching smile, which had the same effect on him as the sun has on ice, it was in a "thaw" voice he continued, "I am so awfully"—but she detected the "thaw," and turned on that smile of

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hers, brought forth her dimples, worked the wicked little lights in her eyes, tricked her eyelashes, and played her one card beauty for all it was worth.

The ice broke.

"Well then, just this once," he said, "but you must remember, Eve, you are a business woman, and I am a business man, and——"

"Alf, this is business, and don't preach to me. I am lonely, all alone, and you are my only friend, you won't——"

Here she caught his not unwilling hand, and he, holding hers, and feeling the pulses beating violently (the effect of too tight buttons on gloves, a size too small), thought it was in connection with her heart, and that that heart was beating for him, and oh! how flattered he was.

He read the threatening note from the authoress in question, promised to look into the matter, and told Eve to find out the authoress's real name, all correspondence being signed M.N.

Ralph Morrison took some time dressing for dinner that night. he was bordering on forty, a fact he never forgot, and which made him exceedingly miserable on the night he dined with the Fields. Alas! if he had only known, it was his age in Winifred's eyes, extreme age, in which all his fascination lay. Already at nineteen, Miss Field would not look at what she termed boys. Many youths would have given their all for Ralph's extra ten years. Guy Golding, Fred Grant, Joe Harrison, and many others, spent hours in trying to add age to their youthful appearance, but their efforts were in vain, and Miss Field declared that they bored her.

Winifred Field surveyed herself in the glass with a deep sigh, nineteen years five months and one week, she looked sixteen, a fact she was quite aware of and deeply mourned. Had her mother allowed it, she would have robed herself in black, and been as grave as a judge in Ralph Morrison's presence. If she had only known, it was her youth that was the attraction.

After all it is as well to be natural, and "cease to lament." If we were able to alter our external appearance at will what surprises would be in store for our surroundings, and what failures we should make. Some of us do try sometimes, and we don't admire the result. When Mrs. Smith comes out with black hair instead of grey, some of us cut her, and the rest don't make pleasant remarks.

* * * * *

Dinner at the Fields was in full swing, everyone was in good humour, Ralph had come to the conclusion that he liked brunettes, he liked them young, he liked Miss Field, he might also have used another word beginning with the same letter, where Winifred Field was concerned. When she handed him the menu with a sweet smile, he glanced at it, and actually turned white. Surely it was not his voice that said, "Did you write this?"

"It's rather a scrawl I am afraid, and I didn't know what plum pudding and mince pies were in French, so I put them in English. Do you know?"

Silence, an awful silence, a terrible idea had come to Morrison. The letter of this morning signed M. N., and this menu, were written by the same person.

He was roused with a start at finding Winifred's large brown eyes fixed anxiously upon him and the enquiry "Is anything the matter?"

"Oh, no," with forced joviality.

"Why! how ever did you guess? How funny, and I want to ask you to do me a favour, I meant to ask you after dinner, may I?"

"Yes, certainly."

Dinner was over, the moment came. Winifred confided that she had written two little tales, she had sent them to a ladies' magazine, and could not get them back. "So knowing you would help me—you always said the law protected one's own property, and they are my own property, aren't they?—I threatened to go to law, and they've accepted. Oh! you will help me, won't you? I haven't told anyone and I'm fearfully worried, but of course you will help me. I don't want my name to come out; it needn't, need it? I called myself M. N., the catechism gave me the idea."

There were tears in her eyes, real tears, real distress. He must help her. It was all satisfactorily settled that she need not give her name, need not proceed with the case. Then the postman came, and with him came a letter from the Editress insisting on her name, and saying the matter was in her solicitor's hands.

He could not disclose his identity, and he promised to help her. Morrison left that night feeling anything but comfortable.

The next few days he tried to dissuade Eve from continuing the case, but it meant constant business interviews with him, which she liked. She pleaded example and said they had gone too far. Hearing he had not sent in his letter yet to the authoress she became impatient.

Winifred he could have easily stopped, but Eve, considering it a good joke, and knowing it cost her nothing, insisted on carrying it through.

Poor Ralph, he couldn't see it through, and lacked courage to explain—explanation to Eve might mean she would propose to him—she had already made several strides in that direction, and in common chivalry he would have to accept. Explanation to Winnie he could not face. she would lose faith in him, that would be fatal. He could plead illness till it had blown over.

No, the Fields knew his mother, would call and inquire. What should he do? He felt inclined to go away and get himself reported dead, but he pictured his mother's face on receiving condolence cards and that would never do.

Happy thought! Important business—suddenly called away. He would remain until—like all women—both had forgotten their grievances, or till Eve had found the tales and all would be peace once more. Next step where? He liked fashionable places, but dared not risk being met. Abroad! He might have to stay away some time, couldn't afford it. Happy thought No. 2! Southend, surely he would meet none of his acquaintances at Southend-on-Mud. So he packed up and went, telling his credulous mother that being a delicate sort of business for the firm, he could not give his exact address or say how long he would be away, but letters addressed to his club would reach him.

Southend out of season is moral suicide, in season (unless your taste lies in bull's-eyes, oranges, booths with

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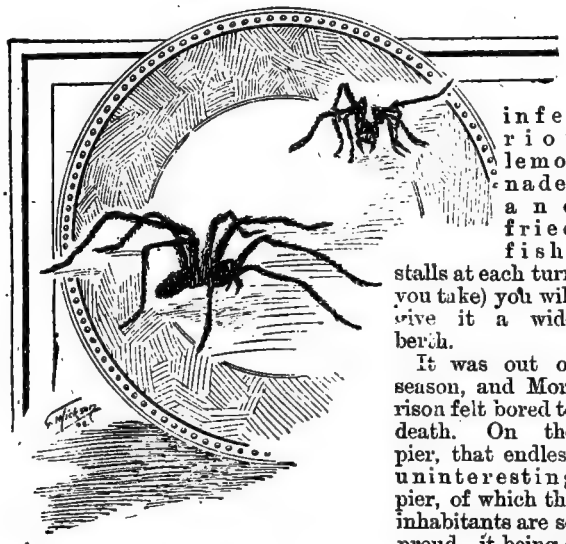

inferior lemonade, and fried fish, stalls at each turn you take) you will give it a wide berth.

It was out of season, and Morrison felt bored to death. On the pier, that endless uninteresting pier, of which the inhabitants are so proud—it being a few feet longer than any other pier—Morrison with plenty of books, papers, and cigars, spent his mornings.

One day he was aroused from his books by a clear young voice:

"Sit here, dear, it is quite sheltered," and an old lady was carefully placed next him by a young lady.

Morrison looked up, apparently wrapped in his book, and took careful notice of the younger lady. Medium height, inclined to be plain, a sweet expression, neither the style of Eve nor the style of Winnie, neither nineteen, nor thirty-six, between the two and nearer the former. He took all this in at a glance and mentally observed "quite charming."

"Now, granny, dear, I will read to you."

"What a voice," he murmured, "even makes the paper interesting."

She took not the least notice of him, but he saw all at a glance, and when he was impartial, he was not a bad judge of character.

Suddenly granny caught his eye.

"Dora, we are disturbing the gentleman with our reading, I am afraid."

Dora looked up with a scarlet blush, and Morrison took off his hat.

"Not in the least, on my honour," he said, as he saw her look of embarrassment.

Then quite naturally he fell into conversation with the old lady first. She had been sent there for her health, he learned, and her granddaughter accompanied her.

* * * * *

"It is the only sheltered seat, granny," Dora remarked next morning, "I hope it is vacant."

It was.

"I was the first to find it," soliloquised Ralph Morrison. "I wonder if it is occupied, I shouldn't mind if it were."

It was.

Friendly relations continued, and after a few days granny asked him to call on her. He was delighted, he spent some very pleasant evenings with her and her granddaughter, Miss Graham.

Old Mrs. Graham was a delightful chaperone, he played a game of picquet with her, during which Dora played and sang most delightfully; then the old lady fell asleep, music ceased, and conversation began. Mrs. Graham was a delightful sleeper whom nothing disturbed.

* * * * *

In town, Mrs. Morrison heard from her son occasionally, and greatly wondered what business detained him.

Winifred wondered, grew pale and impatient; Eve Dicey found life a blank.

One morning Miss Winifred Field, pale, and with much palpitation, drove up to Mr. Morrison's office (just off Cheapside).

Thump, thump went her heart. "If only he's in. If only he's away——"

She tremblingly walked up to the second floor, and there on a glass door was inscribed: "Morrison, Morrison, and Branscomb."

No bell, no knocker, she couldn't walk straight in, she had no pluck. No one to ask, she couldn't stay there, and she couldn't return without knowing if he were back or not. Hot and cold by turns she waited, and when she heard someone coming upstairs she looked round.

Slowly, but surely, came a tall, elegant woman in faultless attire, and made straight for the same door.

One knock, anything but timid, and not waiting an answer, she walked in. Winifred never knew how she did it, but somehow she managed to slip in too.

A clerk got up on their entry.

"Can I see Mr. Morrison?" the elegant lady asked in the most self-possessed manner.

"Take a seat, ladies, I will see."

The clerk, evidently a new one, thought they were together.

Winifred looked at her companion, thought her pretty and took heart.

"I do feel so nervous. I never had any law affairs before."

Mrs. Dicey—it was she—smiled in a superior way.

"Haven't you? I've had heaps. This one is just for fun, Mr. Morrison is a friend of mine."

"So he is of mine."

"Really! Ralph Morrison is my friend."

"So he is mine."

"A silly girl," continued Eve pleasantly, "sent me in some rubbishing little tales and——"

"I'm worried," Winifred broke in, "with a horrid editress person, who has lost some tales of mine, and for fun, just for fun, Mr. Morrison has offered to get them back for me. He says they are my property, so the law is on my side."

Eve smiled, but Miss Field was too agitated to notice it, and then the clerk entered.

"Mr. Morrison is away, Mr. Hubert Morrison will see you if you like."

"When will he return?" asked Eve as she rose to go.

"Can't say, madam."

"I will leave my card."

And once more Winifred slipped out under Mrs. Dicey's protection.

Eve turned to her abruptly.

"You write, under what name?"

"M. N." said unsuspecting Winifred.

"Shake hands, I wish you luck."

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Now Mrs. Dicey was not stupid. In this, Morrison was mistaken. She was clever enough to hide her cleverness, a trick worth knowing. She quickly grasped the position, and in a few words summed up the situation. Ralph had got interested—friendly—with her, and had promised (she had forced him) to help her. Then he had become friendly, perhaps more, with that other girl, and had in all probability offered her his assistance. Found out too late the circumstances of the case, could not assist both, and had gone away till this should blow over. "Who will win?"

Eve Dicey even went so far as to have another search for those tales signed M.N. and actually found them too, and decided that they were not to be returned till the battle had been decided.

* * * * *

It was Mrs. Morrison's at-home day. The Fields were there, also Mrs. Dicey, who by much scheming had managed to get on the old lady's visiting list.

"I have such news," said Mrs. Morrison, "My dear son Ralph is engaged to be married."

Winifred promptly dropped her tea-cup on her new dress and on the drawing room carpet. Mrs. Dicey with more worldly wisdom smilingly asked:

"To whom?"

The tea-cup episode being settled, Mrs. Morrison continued:

"He is at Sout end and there met the Grahams. Strange, old Mrs. Graham, the grandmother of my future daughter-in-law, was a school friend of mine. They are a good family and everything desirable, I could trust Ralph for that. Here is her photograph."

She passed it first to Winifred, who looked for a resemblance to herself in vain, and passed it on in silence.

Eve looked for a resemblance to herself to, also in vain.

"How handsome," she said gushingly.

"Do you think so?"

Mrs. Morrison looked surprised.

"I thought distinctly plain, a good face though, and aristocratic."

The tea-party broke up.

On the way home, Winifred, with apparent irrelevance, remarked:

"I like boys best, after all, they're easier to understand, clever people are a mistake."

"I know why he went away," said Mrs. Field severely, "he had an attraction."

She was wrong.

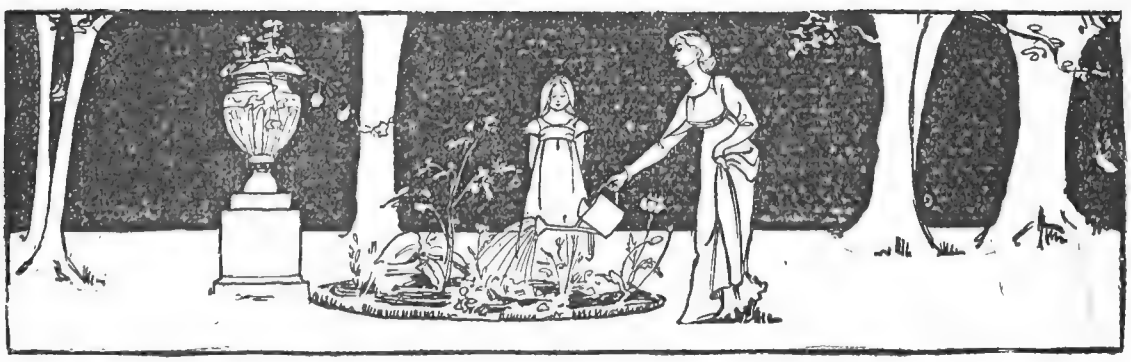
Eve Dicey returned to her office.

"I have been a fool, he had another attraction."

In both these remarks she was wrong.

She silently took out the two tales signed M.N. and returned them "with many thanks and apologies."

QUEENIE SICHEL.



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Black Jim, Convict.

THE man known as "Black Jim," had been sent out to the penal colony of Australia for forgery.

How they came to call him thus, I could never learn. He was not a dark faced man. On the contrary, he was light and fair-haired, and you didn't have to talk with him five minutes to realise that he had been born of gentle people and had no viciousness in his nature.

They sent him up to Woona Wally after his first two years of imprisonment, and he fell into the hands of George Stebbins.

In those days an Australian convict was bid off—that is, a settler in want of help would bid a price for so many men, and they were turned over to him for a certain length of time. He was responsible for their feed and care, and his word was law. He could work them as hard and as long as he wished. He could starve and beat them, and there was no one to come between. In case of insubordination he could shoot them down, and the government simply accepted his statement of the affair.

All convicts were glad enough to get away from prison and out upon the ranches, and in most cases they found good masters and were decently treated.

As a member of the mounted police I knew that Stebbins was a hard man to get along with.

He had been a publican and a bully in England, and his wife had committed suicide, and his two sons been taken away from him by the law on account of his tyrannical and brutal nature.

As the owner of a big sheep ranch at Woona Wally the man had a sort of standing and a few friends, but there were plenty of people who kept clear of him.

A part of the duty of the police was to keep an eye on the hired convicts in a certain district, and we thus came to know that Stebbins had less care for the men he hired than for his dogs. On two or three occasions we had been compelled to report him for excessive punishment, and the feeling between him and the police was not altogether friendly.

Black Jim came up to Woona-Wally with six other men, and the gang were locked up at the police headquarters for the night.

It fell to me to take their pedigrees and post them as to their new master and what would be expected of them.

In our district we always gave a convict a fair start. He was told what would be required of him, advised to do his best to please his master and given to understand that if he went straight we would see that he had fair usage.

I was interested in Black Jim at once.

The law had made a convict of him, but it hadn't degraded him. He had kept an honest face, a clear eye and a frank voice, and I hadn't filled out his blank when I was wondering how he could have been found guilty of crime. I detained him for a minute to ask for his story.

"I haven't any, sir," he quietly answered.

"You do not declare your innocence of the charge?"

"Of what use now that I am serving the sentence?"

I saw that he did not mean to give me any particulars and therefore pressed him no further. I had a more frank talk with him about Stebbins than with any of the others, however. I had an idea that Stebbins would be down on him from the first because of his superior plane, and I went pretty thoroughly into details. When I had finished, the prisoner said:

"I thank you, sir, and shall do my best to please."

Things came about as I feared. As Stebbins inspected his gang he picked Black Jim out for special attention. He had little to say to the others beyond making blood curdling threats of what would happen if they didn't toe the mark, but to Jim he said:

"So they have sent me a gentleman, have they? They thought I needed somebody to teach me manners, perhaps. Mebbe the idea was for you to sit on the ver nda and give me daily lessons. Well, you've come to the wrong shop. Look here, now, I'm going to keep an eye on you. You think yourself head and shoulders above the crowd, but I'll take the conceit out of you. Just give me the slightest excuse, and I'll break you in to beat the band!"

The men were set to work clearing land. At the prison Black Jim had been detailed as a "trusty" and had not come in contact with hard work.

He took his place with the gang just the same and was one of the most industrious workers among them. He knew that Stebbins was watching him and hoping for an opening, and he was determined to disappoint him.

It was two weeks before anything happened.

Then Black Jim had the misfortune to break the handle of the axe with which he was working. Stebbins at once seized upon the incident as a pretext for punishment.

We should not have known anything about it at the police station, six miles away, but for a black boy, who reported that Stebbins had one of his men hung up by the thumbs, and then I was sent over to investigate.

Black Jim had been hanging by the thumbs for two hours when I reached the place and had been unconscious for at least half of that time.

I soon had him down and being cared for, and I had it hot and heavy with Stebbins for half an hour. He contended that the man had been insubordinate and even threatened his life, and some of the convicts backed him up in hopes of making things easier for themselves, but I knew that it was a false charge. It wouldn't do to say too much to Stebbins, however. Low and com-

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cemptible as he was, he had a "pull" with the government and did not hesitate to threaten revenge on me for interfering with his discipline. Neither one of us sent in a report, but we were open enemies after that.

Not one convict in a thousand would have stood the insults and degradation put upon Black Jim during the next year. I know he tried his best, but there was no pleasing Stebbins. He was always boasting that he had a gentleman convict and that he was bound to "break" him, and he spent a good share of his time worrying the man.

It was an almost daily thing for Black Jim to be flogged, and four-fifths of his days were spent under lock and key and on a diet of bread and water. My interest in him saved him somewhat, but as weeks went by I knew what the end would be. He would either rise in his desperation and kill Stebbins or he would bolt for the bush and join a gang of rangers.

There were times when I felt vexed with him that he didn't do one or the other and show a proper spirit, although it would have been my duty to hunt him down in either case.

One day, as I was returning with the troop after hunting down a false alarm of bushrangers, my horse shied and threw me almost in front of Stebbins' house, and as I struck on a stone and had several ribs broken I was carried in.

He was not glad to see me, but under the circumstances was obliged to give me a bed.

Having got settled, the police surgeon would not allow me to be moved.

The brute Stebbins wanted to show his independence of the police and persecute Black Jim at the same time, and the insults he heaped on that convict for three or four days made me itch to shoot him.

On the fourth night of my accident four men and three women arrived for an evening visit. They were about the only friends Stebbins had in a social way, and he made them very welcome. My being in the house was not permitted to interfere with the festivities.

When dinner had been finished and the drink had gone round, Stebbins sent for Black Jim and ordered him to dance for the amusement of the company. The convict respectfully but firmly refused, and his master cried out in indignation:

"You won't dance, eh? Too much of a gentleman to give us a hornpipe! Mebbe this company isn't swagger enough for the likes of a bloomin' murderer!"

"The charge against me was forgery, sir," quietly replied the man.

"I don't care what it was. You are insubordinate, and up you go by the thumbs. After hangin' till daylight, you'll probably be a little more humble."

I protested, but Stebbins persisted.

The men gave him their assistance and the women encouraged him. He had had ropes and pulleys fastened to the ceiling long before, and it wasn't five minutes before the convict was fastened up. I saw desperation in his face as they laid hands on him, but he did not resist. His arms were drawn up till his feet were clear of the floor, and, had I been able to reach a pistol I know I should have killed someone.

The man had been hanging ten minutes, and the agony had almost brought unconsciousness, when the door was kicked open and four bushrangers crowded in.

It was a complete surprise. The women screamed out and began to cry, but the men, with the exception of Stebbins, took it rather quietly.

The bully and coward went white as death and fell into a chair, and it was almost pitiful to hear him beg for his life.

He knew those bushrangers were escaped convicts, and he also knew that stories of his brutality had gone to them.

While three of the rangers covered the people with their pistols, the fourth cut Black Jim down. Then he stepped over and took a look at me and said he had heard of my accident and was sorry for it.

When Black Jim had recovered sufficiently to stand on his feet, the leader of the outlaws put a pistol in his hand, and, pointing to Stebbins said:

"Shoot him dead in his chair. He deserves mercy from no man."

Jim returned the pistol and shook his head. The next instant Stebbins toppled out of his chair with a bullet in his head, and the leader said:

"Sorry to have interrupted the festivities, but it was our calling night. We were after Stebbins alone, and the rest of you need not fear. Come, Jim, we want you."

Two of them helped the forger convict out of the house and upon a horse, and that was the making of the most notorious bushranger in all Australia. He had a career of five years and then died from a bullet, and it was two years after his death before it became publicly known that he had let the law make a convict of him in order to shield a brother.

I had always believed him innocent of the crime, and, knowing how he had been persecuted, and abused by Stebbins, I almost rejoiced when the bushrangers carried him off to make a leader of him.

C. B. LEWIS.

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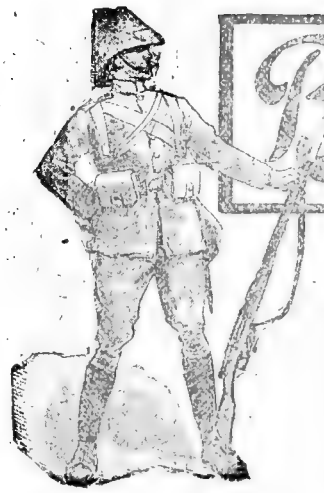

Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

INTRODUCTION.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

CHAPTER XXXI. *(continued).*

Somewhat to Major Bryan's disgust the fight was all over when he got back, but Mafeking and Fourteen Streams and Kimberley were ahead, and he consoled himself and his dusky warriors with the promise of plenty of exciting work there.

Mafeking, lying unprotected on the open veld, surrendered promptly to superior artillery force a week later, and the Union Jack was once more hoisted on the flagstaff over the old fort in place of the rebel Vierkleur. The line south had been kept intact by the Boers for their own purposes, and so General Carrington's little army was able to make good time down to Fourteen Streams; but here his long victorious march of over a thousand miles was brought to a temporary stop.

The armoured train, which formed the advanced guard, supported by strong bodies of mounted scouts on either side of the line, reached the town on the north bank of the Vaal on the afternoon of the fourth of February to find the Vierkleur floating above it and the town and bridge in possession of a strong body of Transvaal Boers. This the General expected, as his prisoners had told him of the intended movements of the three columns.

The bridge was still intact, for the Boers had confidently expected a very different issue to the expedition to the North, otherwise they would have blown it up long ago. The question now was how to get over before it was blown up, or, better still, prevent the Boers blowing it up at all. Captain Murray, who was in command of the train, grasped the situation instanter, and knowing that he had the full confidence of his commanding officer, took the matter into his own hands and decided the question for himself.

He dropped a man to tell the scouts what he was going to do, clapped on full steam, ordered his men to the guns, and rushed at full speed through the town and across the thirteen-hundred-foot bridge, blazing away on both sides of him as fast as his guns could be loaded and fired. Once on the other side of the river he pulled up, backed to the bridge, and kept watch and ward over it. The moment anyone approached it, he took it for granted that his object was to blow it up, and a hailstorm of bullets swept across and settled the matter out of hand.

Meanwhile the scouts galloped back with the news. The British artillery train put on steam and ran up to within range of the town. Then under a heavy fire of field-pieces, Hotchkisses and Gatlings from the enemy, the guns were unloaded with admirable coolness and celerity and dragged off to some rising ground lying to the east of the line which commanded the station, town, and bridge. Here they were rapidly got into position, ammunition was brought up, and in a couple of minutes more the mélinite shells began bursting about the hastily-constructed batteries of the Boers.

Meanwhile, from the other side of the river, Captain Murray kept hammering away with his Maxim-Nordenfelt three-pounders. This kept the Boer garrison sufficiently busy until the remainder of the force had come up. By this time it was getting dusk, and the light was growing very bad for rifle shooting.

General Carrington knew that if Kimberley had not surrendered to an overwhelmingly superior force, it must at the very best be closely invested. There was not an hour to lose; the town must be taken with a rush if he hoped to get his force across the bridge, and so, while the guns were raining a storm of shot and shell and bullets upon it, he detrained his whole force and took them under cover of the artillery fire up to within charging distance.

A thousand or so of the Boers on horseback had now got out of the town and were wheeling round on the right flank. He detached a party of Bluejackets with two Maxims to occupy a little eminence to the right of the line with orders to open fire as soon as the guns were in position. The moment the Maxims spoke the Hussars, Lancers, and Cape Mounted Rifles were ordered to charge.

As they neared the line of fire the storm of bullets, which had already thrown the Boers into something like confusion, stopped, and the three troops raced away neck and neck and burst almost at the same moment, shouting and laughing and hurrahing, upon the straggling line of Boers, rolling them over, cutting them down, and riding through and through them with that irresistible impact which no troops on earth have yet been found able to withstand.

Simultaneously with the cavalry charge, the Leicestershire Regiment, the Bluejackets, a company of Cape Boys, and one of white Infantry were advancing steadily under cover of the artillery fire and the fast-growing darkness into the town. Then the bugles rang out and the artillery fire ceased, to be succeeded by the rattle of fast-succeeding volleys, mingled with the deep-toned hurrahs which told that the Briton had got within charging distance of the Boer.

Within half-an-hour the streets were cleared by the rush of the irresistible bayonets, the Vierkleur flag came down with a run, and the white flag went up in place of it.

While this was going on, Captain Murray, divining that his share of the capture of Fourteen Streams had been done had felt himself at liberty to turn his attention to a party of some five hundred Boers who had ridden out of Warrenton,

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a village to the south of the Vaal River, to learn what was going on. It didn't take him long to teach them. He ceased firing and let them come to within a hundred and fifty yards of the train in the dusk. Then he let go, and within the space of a couple of minutes all that remained of them were a few scattered horsemen galloping for their lives out of range.

The moment the white flag had gone up General Carrington had ridden in and taken possession. The first thing he learnt was that Kimberley had been carried by storm a week before, after a desperate and heroic resistance against overwhelming odds, and that the town and district were held by a force of quite eight thousand Free State Boers, who had left half their number entrenched in it amply provided with artillery, while the rest had gone on down the line to join the Cape rebels in an assault on De Aar.

Very little thought sufficed to convince him that it would be absolutely hopeless for him to attempt to retrieve this disaster—the greatest which had as yet befallen the British arms in South Africa—with the force that he had at his disposal. To advance on Kimberley would be to court certain defeat and possible annihilation, and this was not to be thought of for a moment, for he knew how miserably inadequate the British forces in South Africa were, and rightly felt that it was his duty not to risk a single man without a definite prospect of advantage.

He found that a telegram had already been sent to Kimberly announcing the approach of a hostile force, and so he immediately supplemented this with another to the effect that the said force had been beaten off with great loss, and that all was safe, after which he sent orders to Captain Murray to destroy the telegraph station at Warrenton, and cut the wires. The next thing to do was to get his trains, artillery, and men across the bridge, and this was accomplished without opposition or difficulty.

Meanwhile he had been taking council with himself and the heads of his staff. The result of this conference was one of those bold decisions which again and again have turned the fortune of war in the face of the most adverse circumstances.

He took every horse, mule, and bullock that he could find in Fourteen Streams and Warrenton, together with every

The streets were cleared by the rush of the irresistible bayonets.

waggon and four-wheeled conveyance that he could lay his hands on, and that night made a forced march of thirty miles, of course with the assistance of his trains, down to a point on the railway about twelve miles from Kimberley and twenty-five from Boshof, the nearest town and telegraph station across the Free State border, and the only connecting link between Kimberley and the capital.

There he detrained his men and guns and stores in the grey of the early morning, loaded the latter up on the bullock and mule waggons that he had taken, inspanned his cattle, and, to the surprise and delight of his men, issued orders for an immediate march on Boshof and Bloemfontein.

CHAPTER XXXII.

How the City of Diamonds Fell.

The utterly unprotected condition of Kimberley, one of the wealthiest towns in the Empire, had long been an open scandal and a crying shame to the Cape Government and the Imperial authorities.

Although the amount of the actual wealth and property comprised within the two or three square miles on which the town and diamond mines are situated reaches the immense figure of not less than a hundred millions sterling, and although they lie but a few miles from the frontiers of two possibly hostile peoples—one of which has been turbulent and semi-rebellious ever since the British Government has protected it in the possession of its territory, and the other of which has always considered that the mines ought to be included within its own borders—it has never seemed to strike any responsible person that there is the slightest danger in leaving this precious little spot of ground at the mercy of the first enemy that might choose to attack it.

Here, as elsewhere, the scales only fell from the eyes of officialism when it was too late. As General Goodenough had informed Admiral Dale on board the *Majestic*, the great De Beers Company, which practically owns Kimberley and the surrounding neighbourhood, had faced the emergencies of the situation in a splendidly business-like fashion, and had done all that it could to atone for the criminal negligence of the authorities; and yet their best had not, in the nature of the case, amounted to very much.

The Directors had voted a war fund of a million out of their own treasury, but there was hardly anything to buy with it. Rifles, field-pieces, machine-guns, and ammunition, so sorely needed, were not to be bought at any price, simply because the Boers had been buying them up for the last twelve months. The three Maxims and two seven-pounders, which had been sent up by General Goodenough from Cape Town, with two Maxims already in the town, with a miserably insufficient supply of ammunition, formed the whole of the available artillery.

The Diamond Fields Horse and the Kimberley Rifles had been raised to their full authorised strength of four hundred each, and a civilian guard of volunteers had been enrolled and, with the greatest difficulty, armed with all kinds of rifles, mostly their own property, from combination rifle-and-shot guns to Lee-Metford sporting rifles. They numbered nearly three hundred, and this give a total force of less than eleven hundred men with two small cannon and five machine-guns to defend what is, perhaps, the most valuable tract of land for its area in the world.

The weakest point of Kimberley was its water-supply. The town lies five hundred feet above the Vaal River, from which it draws its supply and the pumping station on the river bank is seventeen miles away. To detach a portion of the miserably inadequate garrison to guard this was out of the question; to leave it unguarded meant to incur one of the greatest dangers to which the town could be exposed.

This vital point was, in fact, the first one struck at. On the night of the fifteenth of January five hundred Boers and a hundred policemen from the Potchefstroom district, with two machine-guns, under the command of Lieutenant Tossel, crossed the border, took Fourteen Streams and Warrenton, and blew up the pumping station, after which Kimberley had to depend upon the impure and sometimes half poisonous water from the mines

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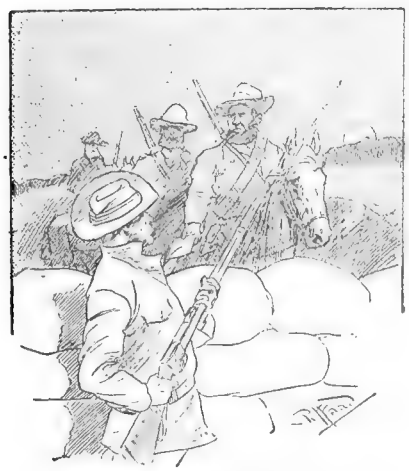
The next blow would have fallen ten days sooner than it did had it not been for the temporary failure of negotiations between the Transvaal and the Free State, in consequence, mainly, of the wholly unexpected declaration of hostilities by the Basutos. But on the night of the twenty-sixth, shortly after a telegram had come up from De Aar, warning Kimberley that the Free Staters were on the move, and informing the Mayor that, in consequence of the momentarily expected rising of the disloyal Dutch in the Cape, no further aid was to be looked for, the telegraph line was cut, the bridge at Orange River was seized, and all traffic stopped.



Their leader presented a letter from the Commandant.

This absolutely isolated Kimberley from the rest of the world, for to the westward there is nothing but the bare and limitless plains of Griqualand West stretching away to Bushmanland and the wilderness of the German territory. On all other sides were enemies thirsting for British blood and hungering for British wealth. The moment it was known that the wires were cut and the line stopped, preparations were made for the long-expected attack.

About ten o'clock at night a small party of mounted Boers, carrying a white flag of truce, rode up the old De Beers Road from the direction of Dorstfontein to a barricade which had been erected on a railway bridge, and, in answer to the challenge of the guard, their leader presented a letter which he said he had brought from the Commandant of the Free State force at Boshof, and peremptorily demanded an answer.

The letter was at once sent to the Mayor, who, with the resident directors and the Secretary of De Beers, advised by Lieutenant-Colonels C. F. B. Woollaston, of the Diamond Fields Horse, and D. Harris, of the Kimberley Rifles, constituted the Committee of Defence.

It was to the effect that three columns of three thousand men each, with artillery and machine-guns, were advancing on Kimberley from the north, south, and east, and would arrive by midnight within range of the town. If by that time Kimberley was surrendered and acceptable security given for the payment of an indemnity of three millions sterling, the town would be spared and private property respected, although it would thenceforward be considered as part of the Free State territory. Failing compliance with these two conditions, the town would be bombarded and carried by assault. This was signed "Adrian Du Plessis, Commandant of the Western Division of the Free State forces."

Such men as those who held Kimberley could only return one answer to such a message. Commandant Du Plessis was told in so many words that Kimberley was a portion of the Queen's dominions, and would remain so as long as there was a cartridge in the place or a man to fire it. After this the City of Diamonds prepared for the worst.

Scouting parties of the Diamond Fields Horse were immediately thrown out up and down the line and towards Beaconsfield and Bultfontein. These returned within an hour with the news that the Boers were massing in force all round and evidently had formidable artillery trains with them. All the women and children had been removed to Barkly West, on the north bank of the Vaal, twenty-one miles away to the north-west, during the preceding week, with the exception of the Nazareth House sisters and about a hundred other ladies who had resolved to stay and nurse the wounded.

The tactics of the Boers in making the ultimatum expire at midnight were clearly apparent. No one knew better than they did how poor Kimberley was in men and means of defence. They knew, too, that in a town so largely constructed of wood they could soon create a potent ally who would work well for them within the line of defences.

As the clock of the Court House in Market Square struck twelve, a dozen flashes of pale flame leapt out of the darkness of the eastern horizon, followed by a roll of thunder, telling that the bombardment had begun. A dozen shells dropped and burst in as many different portions of the town. To reply to it the defenders had only two seven-pounders, which had been mounted on the high ground by the main shafts of the Kimberley and De Beers mines.

The one on the De Beers mine commenced to shell the woods of the village of Kenilworth, which the column from the Transvaal had occupied without resistance since no men could be spared to defend it, while the one on the Kimberley mine was trained on a battery which had been established to the north. This unequal artillery duel was kept up until daylight, and by that time Kimberley was blazing in a score of places while, of course, it was impossible to see what damage, if any, had been done by the defenders' two guns.

Meanwhile, under cover of the shell-fire, the three Boer columns had been closing in from the north, east, and the south, by Kenilworth, Dorstfontein, and Beaconsfield. The defenders, outnumbered nearly ten to one, had so far been able to do nothing but keep such watch as was possible on the movement of the enemy and wait for daylight. To have gone out into the darkness against a foe of immensely superior, though unknown, strength would have been to court destruction in detail, and so, ardently as they longed for a brush with the enemy, prudence forced them to keep quiet behind their barricades and entrenchments until they could use their scanty ammunition with the best effect.

Just about dawn three bodies of mounted Boers, numbering each about a thousand men, made simultaneous rushes. One came from the north by the way of the Transvaal Road, the other from Dorstfontein by the Old De Beers Road, which crosses the railway by a broad iron bridge, and the third along the line of the Beaconsfield tram-line at the end of the Du Toits Pan Road.

Attacks from these directions had been anticipated. Du Toits Pan Road and the railway bridge were strongly barricaded. In the centre of each barricade was a Maxim, and another Maxim had been planted on the big heap of *débris* in "Section 42," north-west of the Transvaal Road, and completely commanding it for a distance of some two thousand yards. The head of the Boer columns were allowed to come within three hundred yards, for the defenders knew that they had not a cartridge to waste. Then the guns spoke to such good effect that men and horses seemed to be swept away like dead flies before a broom.

Their leaders tried in vain to rally them, neither men nor horses could be persuaded to face the withering bullet-storm a second time, and the three attacks were hurled back with terrible cost to the assailants. Meanwhile, a strong column had worked round the Kimberley Depositing Floors to the north, and made a similar attempt at a rush by way of Barkly Road and Vlei Road. The seven-pounder at the head of the Kimberley rock-shaft, and the Maxim on the *débris* heap in "Section No. 6," east of Barkly Road, at once opened fire on them, and here, too, for a few minutes the carnage was terrible.

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The Boers had got in between the high fences of barbed wire which wall off the sections and depositing floors, and many of their horses, maddened by the bullet wounds, swerved up against these, lacerating themselves and their riders and throwing the whole column into confusion. The moment that each attack was repulsed by the gun-fire the retreating columns were charged by companies of the Diamond Fields Horse and the Rifles with a desperate gallantry which showed unmistakably how the fight must have gone had the forces been anything like equal.

The repulse of the four attacks, which had been meant as surprises, brought about a complete change in the tactics of the Boers. They saw that the men of Kimberley meant to keep their word, so they fell back on their batteries, of which they now had four of four guns each in position, one to the north on the *débris* heap at the extreme north of the Kimberley Depositing Floors, one under cover of the trees at Kenilworth, and two on the high ground towards Beaconsfield. In addition to these they had at least a dozen Maxims and Maxim-Nordenfelts in different positions of 'vantage with which they were able to sweep the streets from end to end.

The cannonade now began again with redoubled vigour; hundreds of seven and twelve-pound shells and torrents of Maxim bullets were poured upon the devoted town, while thousands of mounted men manœuvred all round the outskirts, keeping well out of reach and range, but ready to concentrate instantly upon any point at which the defenders might attempt to cut their way out and make a dash for the south.

Such tactics unfortunately could have but one result. The Boer supply of ammunition was practically inexhaustible, while that of the defenders was steadily approaching the vanishing point, in spite of its being used with the utmost care. Added to this, building after building was reduced to ruins by the exploding shells, and conflagration after conflagration broke out and spread from house to house with fearful rapidity.

The head-works of the mines were battered to splinters, and after four hours' continuous firing, both seven-pounders were dismounted and disabled after seventy-five rounds had been fired from each of them, and the last shell in Kimberley had been fired from the De Beers Mine against the Boer battery at Kenilworth. But so far, not a Boer had yet set

The guns spoke to good effect.

foot in Kimberley. The well-served Maxims, and the desperate valour of its handful of defenders, had put the penalty of sudden death on every attempt to do so.

In the intervals of the bombardment rush after rush had been made by the Boers, maddened as they were by the desperate resistance, and hungering for the rich booty which they believed the City of Diamonds to contain, but every one had been stopped and hurled back, first by the sweeping storms of bullets and then by the desperate charges of horse and foot.

But at last the inevitable came. The Boers saw that the Maxims were being fired more and more slowly and at shorter ranges as each succeeding rush took place. Then one by one they became silent altogether, and the exultant assailants closed in from all sides, certain that now the long coveted booty was within their grasp.

The defenders, now reduced to some six hundred smoke-grimed and weary men, nearly every one of whom was wounded, retreated, still fighting stubbornly and giving back shot for shot to the Market Place, above which the Union Jack still floated from the flagstaff on the tower of the Court House.

At length, when the Loyalists were completely hemmed in, Maxims were drawn up to the four corners of the square at the ends of Main Street, Southey Street, Knight Street, and Old De Beers Road, and the two Boer Commandants called upon Colonel Woollaston and Colonel Harris to surrender unconditionally and haul the flag down under penalty of annihilation.

They were answered in a fashion as strange as it was unexpected. The two Colonels sheathed their swords together, and the bugles sang out from the midst of the square. Instantly every rifle-butt dropped to the ground and every man stood to attention. While the Boers were wondering whether this meant surrender or the defiance of despair they felt the ground tremble under their feet. Then came a dull, rumbling roar as though from the bowels of the earth; a vast volume of mingled smoke and flame burst up from the shafts of the two great mines, followed by enormous clouds of earth and *debris*, and in the midst of the fearful din and confusion which followed Colonel Harris unhooked his sword, spurred his horse towards Commandant Du Plessis, and flung it to the earth in front of him, and shouted so that everyone around might hear:

"Now you can take Kimberley, or what's left of it, and you won't find a diamond in the place that isn't five hundred feet underground. The shafts are at your service now."

And so fell the City of Diamonds, taken at a cost of nearly three thousand lives, but only surrendered when it was a waste of worthless ruins.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE BATTLE OF BLOEMFONTEIN.

FURIOUS as the Transvaal and Free State Boers were at the outcome of the barren victory which they had bought so dearly, there was really nothing left for them to do beyond going through the formality of disarming the remnant of the defenders, hauling down the Union Jack with every manifestation of contumely which suggested itself to them, and then taking possession of the ruined town of Kimberley and the Province of Griqualand West, in the name of the two Republics.

It was in vain that they ransacked the town and its ruins from end to end in search of plunder. There was not a diamond to be found. The treasures of De Beers had vanished like so much fairy-gold. The mines were, for the time being, utterly ruined, the kaffirs had betaken themselves into the wilderness, and all that the victors could get out of their prisoners was:

"There are plenty more diamonds down there, and as you own the place now there is no objection to your digging for them."

But the Boers were not destined to have very much leisure for the pursuit of such peaceful occupation as this, for in a day or two rumours began to arrive from the north and south, telling on the one hand of victory after victory

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achieved by General Carrington and the troops which ought by this time to have been destroyed in Matabililand, and on the other of Loyalist preparations which betokened anything but speedy surrender, and of the arrival on the coast of mysterious ships laden with men and weapons and warlike stores, which came from no one knew where—all of which formed a most unpleasant and disquieting sequel to the events which had happened in Delagoa Bay and on the road from Johannesburg to Charlestown.

Then, on the top of these came the really terrible tidings that Lerothodi had fulfilled his threat; and that the Basuto warriors had poured down out of their native mountains in two streams, one upon Ladybrand and the other upon Wepener, and were converging rapidly upon Bloemfontein. These tidings, which reached Kimberley on the 1st of Februrary, caused something like a stampede among the Free State burghers, and the principal men among them flatly told Commandant Du Plessis that if he didn't lead them back to their own country they would go without him.

This produced a violent dispute between the Free State leader and Commandant Klopper, who commanded the Transvaal column. His idea was to hold Kimberley and extend southward along the line so as to get in touch with the Southern Forces of De Aar, for such a junction, once effected, would, if the Cape Boers had risen as they had promised, give them command of the railway system.

Meanwhile, there were plenty of men in the Free State to deal with the Basutos. Added to this there was Carrington to be reckoned with. The moment that he heard that Kimberley had fallen he would be sure to lead his troops to retake it, and this would necessitate holding the town with a large force.

In the end a compromise was effected. Four thousand men were left in Kimberley and along the line under Commandant Klopper, and Commandant Du Plessis led the rest of the men who were in fighting trim, to the number of some 4,500, across the Modder River, and *via* Petrusburg to Bloemfontein, where he arrived after a five days' march to find the capital of the Free State already closely infested by swarms of Basuto horsemen, who had left a wilderness of desolation behind them from the border to the line of railway, and who had only been checked in their advance by the guns of the newly-constructed forts.

The redcoats and bluejackets hauled down the Free State flag and hoisted the Union Jack.

After fighting three pitched battles against enormous odds, he succeeded on the third day after his arrival in forcing his way with little more than half his army into the beleaguered city; but before his wearied and battle-worn men had time to take the few hours' rest that they so sorely needed, they and the garrison of Bloemfontein were roused by the terrible tidings that a new army, composed of English and Zulus, or Matabeles, had suddenly appeared in the open country to the west, and were even at that moment in the act of carrying the chain of hills to the north by storm.

There could be no doubt who the new enemy was. It could only be General Carrington at the head of his victorious army from the North. He had done the very last thing that anyone would have expected him to do in leaving Kimberley for the present to its inevitable fate. He had struck out at the heart of the Free State.

The events of that night will never be forgotten as long as there is a white man in South Africa. The Boers, surrounded on all sides and bewildered by all sorts of conflicting reports, fought as men only do fight when they know that home and country are at stake. The battle raged incessantly to the east and west of the little town, which lies between a range of low hills to the north and some rising ground to the south, on which the principal fort is built. East and west the country is flat and open, and the town, save for the forts on the hills is unprotected.

General Carrington, adhering strictly to the general rule of tactics which the bitter experience of the past had shown to be most advisable in dealing with the Boers, had so timed his arrival that he was able to deliver his first assault about two hours after midnight. This rule of "night attacks and cold steel" naturally offered every advantage to the attacking force.

It completely discounted the superior shooting of the Boers, it turned to account their hatred and almost childish fear of the darkness, and, more than all, it gave a chance for the bayonets to get home.

Umzilizi and his brother Indunas, of course, knew all about the Basuto incursion, and equally, of course, they took care that Lerothodi, who was commanding his mountain warriors in person, should be duly advised of the coming of General Carrington's force.

A brief *indaba*, or conference, was held about midnight on the Brandberg, a wooded hill about seven miles to the west of Bloemfontein, and a rough plan of action decided upon.

The Basutos were entrusted with the task of keeping the plains clear and masking the advance of the British and their allies.

The General then divided his own forces into three divisions.

The left or northern wing consisted of the Matabele Legion under Major Bryan and his trusty lieutenants, and to them was entrusted the task of driving the Boers out of their positions in the northern heights, or the Bloemfontein Kopjes, as they are called. They were to be followed by an artillery train, which was to occupy the positions of advantage as they cleared them.

The right wing consisted of the men of the Leicestershire Regiment, under Captain Pearson; a detachment of Marines, under Captain Vivian; and the Naval Brigade, under Commander Morshead, of the *Magnificent*, and Lieutenant Ferris, late of the *Thrasher*. Its business was to storm the lower heights to the south of the town, and if possible, carry the fort by assault.

The centre, under the General himself, consisted of the Rhodesian forces with the York and Lancaster men under Colonel Alderson, supported on either flank by the Lancers and the Hussars.

As had been the case in Rhodesia, the tactics employed by the assailants completely mystified and ended by demoralising the Boers.

Rockets rushed up out of the darkness on all sides of the town, great globes of blue fire burst out high up in the sky, and cartridges of dynamite and mélinite came raining down on the stones of the kopjes, among which the Boers had taken up their positions, and falling into the interiors of the forts themselves.

Then, before the weird blue light disappeared a brief storm of rifle and machine-gun bullets was poured in, and then, through the sudden and utter darkness that followed came the wild yells of the Matabele Legion, the deep-toned

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hurrahs of the British and Colonials, and then the swift, irresistible rush of the pitiless steel.

As the fight went on hour after hour, the Boers, suffering under every disadvantage from the novel mode of fighting, were slowly driven from position along the two ranges of the heights, while in the plain below the British horse and foot were yard by yard driving in the defenders to the west, and to the east beyond the railway line the fiery Basutos were hurling themselves in incessant charges on the outbuildings of the station which were held by twelve hundred Boers under Commandant Klopper.

At length, just as the dawn was beginning to show over the sharp peaks of the mountains towards the Sovereignty Border, a rocket soared up from the southern heights and burst into a cloud of red sparks. At the same moment the firing to the south suddenly stopped, and was followed by a hoarse, deep, rolling sound of cheers, such as could only come from British throats. The rocket was the signal that the fort, built on the site of the old English Fort, which dated from the time of the foundation of the town, had been carried by assault.

The guns of the fort to the north, which completely command the southern heights, were immediately turned on it, and opened a heavy fire, but by this time the northern kopjes, with the sole exception of the fort, were in the possession of the British, and three batteries of twelve and seven-pounders had been got in position, completely commanding the town.

The red-coats and blue-jackets, after silencing the guns of the old fort, hauled down the Free State Flag, hoisted the Union Jack in place of it, and then promptly evacuated the works, leaving the artillerists on the opposite hill to pound them to ruins at their leisure.

Then, wheeling round the base of the fort, the blue-jackets made a brilliant charge up to the monument commemorating the last Basuto war, driving a party of Boers before them at the point of the bayonet, and planting a couple of maxims on either side of the monument, from whence they completely commanded a wide street leading down to Market Square in the centre of the town.

The sight of the British flag once more flying over the old fort damped the spirits of the defenders as much as it raised those of the assailants.

All the positions of advantage, with the exception of the north fort, were now in the hands of the British, and the town lay at the mercy of their batteries.

The losses of the defenders, mainly in consequence of the utterly strange tactics pursued by the attacking forces, had been exceedingly heavy, and the survivors were now completely hemmed in on all sides.

Every outlet was commanded by machine-guns or the mountain batteries, and so, shortly after six, President Steyn recognised that the end could now be but a matter of time, and, in order to save the inhabitants of the town from the horrors of a general assault, which he saw must soon be made, he hoisted the white flag over the Government Offices, and sent a messenger to General Carrington to request an armistice.

The reply was as unexpected as it was staggering. General Carrington wrote:

"I have neither authority nor inclination to treat with rebels against the Queen's authority and violaters of the Queen's dominions so long as they have arms in their hands, nor have I any intention of making the same mistake at Bloemfontein as was made at Amajuba Hill. The forts must be surrendered and all arms and ammunition given up within two hours, or the town will be carried by storm. Surrender must be unconditional but life and private property will be rigidly respected."

A meeting of the Executive had already assembled at the Government Offices, and it proceeded at once to discuss General Carrington's ultimatum, for indeed it was nothing less.

One or two were for fighting it out, but the President and the majority clearly saw the hopeless folly of further resistance. The town was surrounded, one of the forts had been taken by storm, and at any moment its guns could be turned upon the town as a prelude to the general assault. The North Fort, it was true, might hold out as long as its water and provisions lasted. It might also shell the town after the British took possession of it, but in that case they would simply evacuate it, retire out of range, and starve the place out.

President Steyn affixed his signature to the letter.

Both the railway and the telegraph were in their hands, and no news could be sent to the Transvaal or reinforcements asked for.

Meanwhile, too, the Basutos and Matabeles might break loose from control and lay the country waste far and wide, while the Commandos were in the south and west. In fact, the only chance of escaping the long-due vengeance of the Basutos lay in such control as General Carrington and the Imperial Government might be able to exercise over them.

An hour and a half was spent by the Executive in deliberation and by the British and their allies in improving and strengthening their positions, and then, with a heavy heart, and faltering hand, President Steyn affixed his signature to the letter informing General Carrington that, in the interests of humanity, it had been decided to surrender the town.

Immediately on receipt of it the General sent instructions for the burgher forces to pile their arms in the Market Place, and then march out of the town on to the open stretch of ground between the railway and the kopjes. At the same time he requested that a member of the Executive should accompany a detachment of the Imperial troops to the North Fort, and superintend its formal surrender.

An hour later the General entered the town, surrounded by his staff, riding at the head of the Imperial and Colonial troops which had won such rapid and brilliant successes, as it were out of the very hands of the Fates themselves. In front of the new Raad-Zaal the formal act of surrender took place.

The Free State flag fluttered down from the lofty flagstaff, and as the Union Jack went up to take its place the band of the Leicestershire Regiment played the first few bars of "God Save the Queen," and then the General made a brief but pregnant proclamation abrogating the Constitution of the Orange Free State, and re-asserting the Queen's authority from the Orange River to the Vaal.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CAPTAIN MURRAY'S GAME OF SPOOF.

THERE was one portion of General Carrington's force which had not the good fortune to share in the glory of the brilliantly successful attack on the capital of the Free State, although by way of compensation, the Fates, as it proved, had a very special distinction in reserve for it. This was the crew, as it may perhaps be termed, of the armoured train under the command of Captain Murray.

The gallant little Captain and his men were the only

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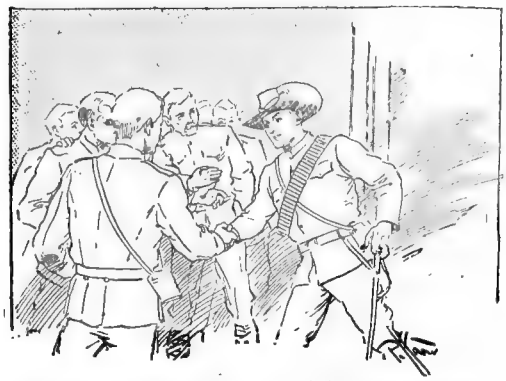
members of the Rhodesian force whom the orders to march on Bloemfontein did not please. When they were first communicated to him he commented briefly but pungently on them, and then, jumping out of the cab of the forward



Captain Murray hurriedly grasped the hands that were thrust out to him.

engine, he went straight to the General and remonstrated respectfully but eloquently with him, reminding him that it was a thousand pities that such a splendidly effective fighting machine as the armoured train had proved to be should have to be either destroyed or left for the enemy to take possession of.

In spite of the shortness of time at his disposal the General listened patiently to him, and then said good-humouredly:

"It's no use, Murray. I'm very sorry, and I quite see your point; but we can't relieve Kimberley, while we have a very good chance of taking Bloemfontein with a rush, simply because it is the very last place that they would dream of seeing us at, and as they haven't built the line across yet, I am afraid your train will have to be left."

This was just what Captain Murray had expected, and so he was ready with his answer.

"Yes, General, that is perfectly right, I know, but still—just think how much use that train would be to our people down at De Aar. Why, it might be the means of saving the junction—the most important one for us in all South Africa."

"Won't you let me try to rush her through, General?" he went on appealingly. "My chaps will volunteer to a man and enjoy the job. They're a hard-boiled lot, and they'll put her through or bust in the struggle. The Boers have no notion that we are here yet, for the wires are down, and we haven't left them a horse or a mule to ride. We can be through in half-an-hour if we have luck and the line's clear."

"And if it isn't?" queried the General.

"Then," said the little man, shutting his teeth with a snap, "by the Holy Smoke, I'll rush her into the station, blaze away as long as I have a cartridge left, and then dynamite the whole shoot to glory. I've two or three hundredweight of the stuff on board."

"And, by the Holy Smoke, you shall try it, Murray!" laughed the General, catching the infection of his enthusiasm. "Go ahead, and good luck to you, and if you can manage to smash the telegraph office up as you are going through by all means do it. If not, don't forget to pull up and have the wires down on the other side, or you'll have the Modder and Orange River bridges blown up to a certainty."

"Thank you, General, thank you! You needn't fear me forgetting a thing like that. I shall either be in De Aar before you are halfway to Boshof, or I shall have run the train slap into Kingdom Come."

With that Captain Murray saluted his commanding officer, hurriedly grasped half-a-dozen hands that were thrust out to him as he turned away and then went off on his desperate mission. As he had said, every man of the armoured train crew jumped at the chance of emulating the brilliant exploits of Commander Robertson and his companions, of which they had by this time received full accounts by telegraph from Salisbury and through that much more mysterious native news-agency, the secret of which no white man has ever yet solved.

If there were to be any chance at all of success it would have to depend upon a judicious mixture of strategy and dash, and Captain Murray was quite prepared to accept this condition. Three or four Transvaal flags had been captured at Fourteen Streams and Warrenton, and he had very little difficulty in getting possession of these. Then, somewhat to the surprise of his men, he proceeded to decorate the forward engine with them.

"You see," he said, in answer to the wondering remonstrance of one of his lieutenants, "we've sent the beggars a message to say that we've been thrashed, and as they know we had the train they'll be expecting their chaps to bring it along. They can see it coming a long way from Kimberley station, and when they see the flags, of course, they'll run away with the idea that this is the captured train, so they'll have the station clear for us to run into, and then—well, you just wait and see. I'm going to teach them a little quiet game of spoof."

The explanation was perfectly satisfactory, and of their own accord those of the men who were wearing uniforms took off their coats, pulled the red and blue puggarees off their hats, unfastened the left flaps of the brims from the crown, slouched them down and generally made themselves look as much like Boers as possible.

Meanwhile, the two engines had been getting up a full head of steam, and within a few minutes all was ready to start. Then the crew clambered on board, the guns were loaded, ammunition was placed ready for instant use, rifles were looked to, and fuses were attached to a score of parcels of dynamite, each weighing about ten pounds. Then the order to go was given, and the train, with its freight of potential death and destruction, slowly gathered away, and was soon spinning easily along at about five-and-twenty miles an hour.

At this speed a few minutes brought it within sight of Kimberley, and the light was now strong enough to enable Captain Murray, through his glasses, to see the ruin that had fallen upon the lately prosperous town. He also saw that there was a train standing in the station. He gritted his teeth and said:

"Well! the beggars have played the very mischief with Diamondopolis and no mistake, and if they don't get that train out of the way there'll be a smash."

Then with the insolent assurance which generally commands success, he put his hand on the whistle-tap and sent a succession of hideous shrieks from the steam syren screaming through the still morning air. This instantly brought a dozen or so field-glasses to bear on the approaching train from the station, in which a detachment of Boers was being embarked for the South. Those who held them saw the engine decked with Transvaal colours, and immediately fell into the trap that the Captain had laid for them.

The train in the station began to slowly pull out on to the siding. But a moment or two made it apparent that unless the armoured train slowed down, there would be a smash which would probably mean disaster, since the points would necessarily be against it. Captain Murray therefore gave the order to down breaks, and at the same time told his men to sit tight and be ready. This was taken by the Boers to mean that the supposed captor of the armoured train wished to run it alongside the platform, and so the other train was moved off and the points set back and the line left clear for it to come in.

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"Now's our time," said the Captain to his engineer. "It's now or never. Off brakes and let her go for all she's worth."

The syren screamed again, the train moved forward, increasing its speed with every yard, and, to the amazement of the Boers, who expected it to slow down again and stop, it came thundering into the station at something like thirty miles an hour. It was in and out again before they awoke to the disgusting conviction that exactly the same trick had been played upon them as had been played at Standerton.

But they speedily became aware of another matter, which claimed their more immediate attention, for, fast as the train had gone through the station, it had left something behind it, and that consisted of a score or so of oblong wooden boxes with burning fuses attached to them, which had been quietly dropped overboard, and were lying along the line and under the platform.

Instantly a shout of "Dynamite!" was raised, and there was a general stampede, in the hurry of which everyone naturally thought of nothing but his own safety. This, no less than the blowing up of the station, which in a few moments was only a heap of shapeless, burning ruins, was exactly the effect that Captain Murray had intended to produce.

A few words flashed down the wire from Kimberley to Modder or Orange River meant the destruction of the bridge, and irretrievable disaster; but by the time the panic had abated, and someone thought of the telegraph, he had stopped his train a couple of miles on the other side of Beaconsfield, cut the wires, and pulled up half-a-dozen rails, which he thoughtfully took away with him, in case they might be put to an undesirable use. Then the train, with its forward engine still decked with the rebel flags, got up speed again and ran the remaining twenty-three miles to Modder River in a little under the hour.

The town was occupied by a small force of Free State Boers, but as these had no notion of what had happened at Kimberley, they allowed it to run through the station and clear the bridge, not only without opposition, but accompanied by the cheers of those who saw it. Thirty-two miles further on it pulled up at Belmont Station, a place of no strategic importance, which had been left unprotected, and was therefore taken possession of. Here the wires were cut and a few rails taken up while the engines were being re-coaled and watered.

There was a general stampede.

Twenty-one miles further on the train rushed at full speed through Orange River and cleared the great bridge without a hitch, and entered upon the last stretch of its so far prosperous run. Of course the wires were, as usual, cut immediately the train was out of sight of the town.

Captain Murray had some idea of blowing up the great bridge behind him, but as it would take several weeks to repair it, and as it might be wanted for the British advance to the North, he decided to leave it standing. He also thought of telegraphing on to De Aar from one of the wayside stations to say he was coming, but here again second thoughts warned him that it was quite possible that the rebel Boers of the Cape might have by this time risen in force and captured the junction, so he kept up an easy speed of five-and-twenty miles an hour, and decided to be his own news-bearer.

A run of eighty minutes brought him within sight of the junction, and convinced him that in this case certainly second thoughts had been best. Before the train came in sight of the station the sound of heavy firing began to roll up the line, and as his engine swung into view and he got his glasses to bear on the station he saw that a big fight was in progress, or rather just about to be decided.

The Loyalist garrison had, in fact, been attacked that morning by a force of between four and five thousand rebels, and, after a desperate resistance of nearly five hours, was being driven out of the town and station and along the line to Naauwpoort, where, at Hanover, some twenty-five miles further on, another large force of rebels had occupied the hills on either side of the railway.

The situation of the defeated garrison was therefore a desperate one. All the country to the south was up in arms. The passes of the Sneeuwberg were held by the rebels. To the east they had joined hands with the Free Staters over the border, and the fall of Kimberley had closed the way to the North.

As the train hove in sight, the Loyalists, to the number of about two thousand, were retreating, fighting in good order, and apparently with the object of taking up a position in the hill to the south-east.

A heavy column of Boers was just crossing the line to execute a flanking movement. When they saw the flags on the engine they welcomed it as an ally with loud shouts of triumph. But a few moments changed these to cries of very different import, for the train, instead of slowing up as it approached the station, increased its speed with every yard, and before they had time to get clear of the rails, it had rushed through the centre of the Boer column, sweeping a score or so of men up on the cow-catcher, and hurling their mangled bodies to right and left.

Then, through the cries and shrieks of agony and the shouts of rage and astonishment, there burst the dull, thudding roar of the Maxims, and the sharp bang—bang—bang of the Nordenfeldt quick-firers.

"Let 'em have it, boys! Give 'em beans before they can run!" shouted Captain Murray, as he shut off steam, and ran up to the Maxim that was mounted on the tender of his engine.

For the next few minutes the scene was one that would have beggared all description. Clouds of smoke and streams of flame poured out from end to end of the armoured train, and ahead and in the rear, and to right and left, a hurricane of machine-gun and rifle-bullets, and two-pound shells from the Nordenfeldts, was poured upon the astounded and demoralised victors of a few minutes before.

The Loyalists, seeing that, for the time at least, deliverance had come, faced round and added their rifle-fire to that of the train, and for the few moments that the paralysis of panic lasted the carnage was appalling.

The Boers, not knowing for the moment what to do, demoralised and disorganised, were mown down in hundreds by the sweeping fire of the guns and the deadly volleys of rifle-fire from the Loyalists.

Then there came a wild stampede of panic-stricken men and horses, maddened by terror and the torture of bullet wounds, and the rebel commando, caught and overwhelmed in the very moment of victory became a scattering rabble, riding or running for dear life to escape the pitiless hurricane of lead and iron which incessantly swept the thickly-strewn field of death.

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Rev. Annabel Lee," by Robert Buchanan, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. E. Chance, c.o. Mr. B. Dalton, Maltravers Street, Arundel. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with ANY SUBJECT and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, May 21st. Post-cards only, please.

In Instalments.

A SMALL boy, returning home from school for the holidays, had occasion to take a cab between two railway-stations in London.

Having paid his fare, the following conversation took place:

"I'd like a bit for myself, sir," cabby whined, "just to drink your health. Holiday-time, you know, sir."

Small Boy: "Oh, yes! How much will that take? Half-a-sovereign do it?"

"Thank you kindly, sir, and bless you!"

"Quite welcome, cabby. Here's the first instalment."

And the small boy handed him twopence.

E. C.

He Knew the Sort.

A LADY was driving her husband down a narrow lane, when, turning a sharp corner, they encountered a brewer's van. There was no room to pass, and the lady said very tartly:

"You must go back, for I shall not. You ought to have seen us before entering the lane."

"But, my dear," said the husband mildly, "the man couldn't see round the corner."

"I don't care," was the characteristic reply. "I'll sit here till doomsday before I give way to that man."

The carter, who had overheard the colloquy, here remarked:

"A' richt, maister, I'll back oot; I've got sic anither at hame."

A. H.

Golf à la Kaffir.

AN intelligent Hindoo has been heard to define billiards as a game in which two men, armed with long sticks, poke at a ball, while one player says: "Oh!" and the other "Hard lines."

Golf seems to have similarly impressed the native South African mind. A Kaffir warrior was observed attentively watching the efforts of certain unskilful players to extract their ball from one of those deep bunkers which greatly abound on African courses. The following day this same Kaffir was seen to be belabouring a great boulder with a huge pole, and shouting "Hang it!" the while.

"This white man's game," said the dusky child of nature. "Welly good game white man's game."

The story has the merit of being true. All golf stories are.

H. D.

Paddy in a Fix.

REGARDING the Queen's visit recently to the wounded soldiers in hospital there is a story told which is an uncommonly good one.

There was a big Irishman who had a great dread that the Royal visitor might address him, and, consequently, the event made him extremely nervous. As it happened Her Majesty did address him, her question being as to how long he had been in the service.

The poor fellow managed to gurgle out "Fiftane years, Miss!"

It is believed that the Queen smiled—sympathetically.

E. D.

Easily Rectified.

SOME years ago a gentleman was travelling through the West of Ireland, where the railway system was none of the best. Upon one occasion, he was surprised to find the train come to a standstill at a point where there was no appearance of a station.

Putting his head out of the carriage window to ascertain the cause of the stoppage, he observed the guard walking leisurely down the line.

"Anything wrong?" he inquired of the guard, with an anxious face.

"Oh, nothing much, your honour!" replied the latter reassuringly, "only the signal was against us; but I just put it right, an' we'll be off ag'in directly."

D. R.

What He Said.

A DOTING mother recently brought her only child, a spoiled damsel of five summers, to a photographer to have her picture taken. Her little ladyship, however, could not be induced to sit still for two consecutive seconds. The photographer was as suave as he could be, and tried every device of gentle persuasion to make the little wriggler keep still, but all in vain. Finally he said to the despairing mother:

"Madam, if you leave the dear little pet alone with me for a few minutes I think I can succeed."

The mother had scarcely withdrawn when she was summoned back by the triumphant photographer, who joyfully said all was satisfactory.

When they reached home the mother asked:

"Alice, what did the man say to you when I left you alone with him?"

"He thaid," lisped Alice, "thit thtill you thpoiled little rathcal, or I'll thake the head off you."

S. M.

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For the Good of the Public.

The bankruptcy courts can boast some delightfully naïve rejoinders. "How, sir, is it possible," angrily demanded the opposing counsel of the bankrupt, "to live in the luxurious style you have affected on two hundred pounds a year?"

The witness replied with an air of justifiable pride that that "was a problem to which he had devoted a considerable time in the interests of social economy, and the results of his humble efforts were now before the court." C. L.

Utilising the Tombstones.

Not long ago a cottager in a village in Kyle applied to the landlord to have a new hearthstone. The landlord declined to give him one, but told him there were a lot of old gravestones piled up in the churchyard, and that he ought to go and take one of those.

A few days after he called on the cottager, and found that he had taken the hint, and also the gravestone; but that he had put it down with the lettering uppermost.

"Why did you put it down that way?" he asked rather angrily.

"Oh!" was the reply, "it does fine to teach the bairns the alphabet." S. K.

A Ghost that Felt Cold.

A young lady arrived late one night on a visit to a friend. She awoke in the darkness to find a white figure at the foot of the bed. While she watched, the counterpane was suddenly whisked off, and the apparition vanished.

After an anxious, not to say chilly, night, the visitor went down with little appetite for breakfast. At the table she was introduced to a gentleman, a very old friend of the family, who had, she learnt, also been sleeping in the house. He complained of the cold.

"I hope you will excuse me," he said to his hostess, "but I found it so cold during the night that, knowing the room next to mine was unoccupied, I took the liberty of going in and carrying off some of the bed-clothes to supplement my own."

The room, as it happened, was not unoccupied; but he never learnt the mistake. F. S.

She Was Not a Doctor.

Not long ago a good joke was played on a young medical man in a town in Scotland—which had the effect of recalling him to the fact that the healing of the sick should be his first care. For a time the medico fairly divided his time and attention between his lady-love and his patients.

Latterly, however, the patients have felt themselves neglected, the lady-love, who lives in the neighbourhood, monopolising the doctor's attention, and when a call was made at the surgery, the young man was generally to be found at the home of his inamorata.

So, in the dead of night some waggish folk removed the name-plate from the surgery door and screwed it on to the front gate of the lady's residence.

It is not said whether the doctor relished the little joke, but there is a marked improvement in his attendance to patients since the occurrence. M. C.

She Felt the Importance.

Some time ago a worthy farmer and his wife had a visit from their minister, who was asked to stop to tea.

Their servant, Mary, who is a Highland lass, had newly come from that locality, and her mistress put her in charge of getting the bread-and-butter ready for tea.

Mary, thinking the minister's visit was of unusual importance, came and whispered in the guid-wife's ear:

"Will I butter the bread on baith sides?" F. Q.

He Pulled the Tooth.

The sight of a row of forceps has closed the mouths of many sufferers, even after they had seated themselves in the dentist's chair. Dental surgeons anticipate this, and the following amusing instance of how an obstinate Irishman was made to show his teeth may not be amiss.

Pat came to his office with his jaw very much swollen from a tooth he desired to have pulled. But when the suffering son of Erin got into the dentist's chair and saw the gleaming pair of forceps approaching his face, he positively refused to open his mouth.

The dentist quietly told his office boy to prick his patient with a pin, and when Pat opened his mouth to yell the dentist seized his tooth and out it came.

"It didn't hurt as much as you expected it would, did it?" the dentist asked, smiling.

"Well, no," replied Pat, hesitatingly, as if doubting the truthfulness of his admission. "But," he added, placing his hand on the spot where the boy pricked him with the pin, "begorra, little did I think the roots would reach down like that." E. W.

Special Irish.

A young Irish recruit was recently outside the guard-room of the barracks, one of his duties being to strike the hours on the gong suspended near the sentry-box.

"Bedad, it's twelve o'clock," exclaimed Pat, as the barrack clock announced that hour. Then, with the mallet provided for that purpose, he administered twelve vigorous strokes on the gong.

"Sure, now, I believe it was eleven I sthruck ather all," he muttered a moment later. "Faith, I'll put it right, anyway." So saying, he brought the mallet down on the gong again with the energy of a Hercules.

"What in the name of wonder are you doing?" exclaimed the sergeant of the guard, rushing precipitately from the guard-room. "Don't you know you've struck thirteen instead of twelve?"

"Be the powers, did I, now?" cried Pat, scratching his head ruefully. Then suddenly his face brightened, and, going to the other side of the gong, he dealt it one mighty blow that reverberated through the length and breadth of the barracks.

"Now, what's that for?" demanded the astonished sergeant.

"Whist! whist!" replied Pat, with a grin of infinite satisfaction. "I've bin takin' the odd number off!" W. E. B.

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Why Not Tell Mamma?

My Louis XVI. chiffonier is a very handsome and graceful piece of furniture. It is inlaid and polished, with locks of burnished copper, and always seems to be smiling as if its red and white mosaics were merry, rosy lips.

It was given to me by my grandmother, who inherited it from her grandfather, and I verily believe that it once stood in a boudoir of the palace of Marly.

Never was an innocent little piece of furniture abused and rated so mercilessly as my chiffonier was when I chanced to think of it one day during my sojourn at the Piræus, in Greece.

You will no doubt ask why I thrust my trembling hand through my hair and cried out, "Miserable idiot!" without stating whether the epithet was applied to myself or to my chiffonier.

Good heavens! The wonder was that I left a single hair on my head!

I had been so fortunate—some time before—as to be loved by the most charming of women. I shall not attempt to describe her, not even by the colour of her hair; it is sufficient to say that for two years I called her "my angel" and "bright image of my dreams."

At the end of that period, I allowed one of my friends to say to me, in speaking of her:

"How could you be such a fool?"

She sent me back my letters, and I neglected to return hers, but put the whole lot into the drawer of my old chiffonier, without thinking to turn the key.

The chiffonier was in my room; my room was in my mother's chateau; my mother's chateau was 800 leagues away, in the middle of Provence. In setting off unexpectedly on a diplomatic mission, I had completely forgotten to destroy those remains of an attachment which had been delightful—so long as it lasted.

When I accidentally called out the memory of those letters from some obscure corner of my brain I started up in surprise and shame, for I knew that my thoughtlessness might seriously compromise a woman who had done nothing to deserve such treatment at my hands.

I felt that my conduct had been unworthy of a gentleman, and in a fine frenzy I rushed out of the house, inquired for the first steamship bound for Marseilles, took passage, and, listening to nothing but the voice of my conscience, returned to France.

A week later I arrived at the maternal abode, and I will spare you a recital of the ejaculations, the "What, you, George, so soon?" which greeted me as soon as I appeared.

My mother nearly stifled me with her embrace, and was sure that something dreadful had happened to me, and I had great difficulty in reassuring her. When she had grown calm, I said, in as different a tone as possible:

"Will you have my bags sent to my room, mother dear?"

"Certainly, my son; you must be tired out," she answered. Then summoning a servant, she said: "Take my son's baggage to the blue room, Pierre."

"You mean the green room," I added.

"No, the blue room," persisted my mother.

"But the green room is my room."

"It was yours once, George," she said, smilingly.

"And whose is it now?" I asked, in surprise, and my mother pointed to the door, saying merrily:

"Here comes the present occupant."

"Gabrielle!" I cried, going to meet my cousin, the loveliest and most charming of girls, with abundant blonde hair, eyes as blue as heaven, a smile of childish innocence, and teeth like pearls.

Unfortunate, thrice unfortunate man that I was!

Gabrielle—gay, artless, and confiding, though a trifle shy—gave me her hand demurely, as she said:

"How do you do, Cousin George?"

My face must have betrayed my confusion as I took her hand, and looked searchingly for some sign of dissimulation in her soft eyes.

Had she found the letters, had she read them?

To tell the truth Mme. Blanc had loved me ardently, and had been so impudent as to express her sentiments in writing, ranging the gamut of ohs and ahs, with plentiful exclamation points attached thereto.

And suppose little Gabrielle had read them—I blushed at the thought.

But quite calmly she said: "How do you do, Cousin George?"—that was all, and in my great palm lay a soft, but cool, maidenly little hand.

Ah, but what abyss is deeper than a woman's heart, as the palmist says. Suppose she had read the letters!

The only way to make sure was to go into the room and look for them.

Gabrielle's room! What sweet melody in the words, yet I felt that I dared not enter that sanctuary, although I had known my cousin since she was a child.

"Come, George, and see how prettily I have arranged your room," she said, suddenly.

Joy, bliss, ecstasy filled me as she spoke; I was saved. Innocence had come to the rescue of depravity!

Lightly and gracefully she ran up the staircase; what a pretty figure she had. I followed her like a culprit, feeling almost afraid to go, but yet I must at all hazards get my letters.

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My former room was perfectly charming, decked out in blue and white, and with no odour of cigars anywhere. The little bed was modestly draped with snowy curtains which looked like the wings of guardian angels. I looked around anxiously for the old chiffonier; there it stood as usual.

"May I have some water, Gabrielle? I am dying of thirst," I said.

She took up the carafe, but I, artful demon, had already observed that it was empty.

"Wait a minute. I will get you some," she said, and left the room.

I rushed to the chiffonier and opened the drawer—horror! it was empty!

The next instant my cousin returned, gave me a glass of water, then showed me her album, and we talked merrily, just as we used to do when we were playfellows.

But where were my letters? Had she found them and hidden them away, or had she burned them? My head seemed to swim as I wondered.

As soon as I could think of a pretext, I left Gabrielle, and in the passage I met my aunt, her mother. She greeted me joyfully, then shook her finger at me in a mysterious way, and with a very knowing air, whispered:

"Come with me, you naughty, careless boy."

I followed her into her own room, where she opened a drawer, saying meanwhile:

"When we first arrived here it fortunately occurred to me that before putting a young lady into a bachelor's room, it would be well for me to look about a little. I have had some experience of young men and their ways."

Here she put a package into my hand. Heavens and earth!—my letters.

I threw my arms around my aunt's neck, kissed her rapturously, and confessed everything.

A week passed. One morning, when I got up, I found a tiny piece of paper on the floor, as if it had been slipped under the door. I picked it up, it was a letter.

"What does this mean?" I thought, and then unfolded it and read:

DEAR COUSIN,—Why do you not tell mamma all about it?

"All about it?" What does she mean? Dear cousin, it is from Gabrielle!

I did not understand it at all, and waited anxiously for the breakfast hour. When I heard my cousin go down-stairs, I darted out and was going to speak to her, but she blushed, turned her face away, and putting a piece of paper into my hand, said, hurriedly:

"Take back your letter and speak to mamma."

My letter! I rushed out into the garden and read the missive. Thunder and lightning! it was my writing, my style, my name.

You are adorable, therefore I adore you. Will you listen to me? Will you let me devote my life to you? A word from you and I throw myself at your feet. GEORGE.

It was, indeed, my letter. It was number one of my effusions to the ex-queen of my heart. It had slipped out of the package of letters, and Gabrielle, finding it in the chiffonier, thought that I had placed it there for her, and her answer was: "Speak to mamma." The result of the accident was I spoke to "mamma," and I married Gabrielle; I adore her, and am the happiest husband in the world.

A. LITTLE.

NO ONE KNOWS

When the War Will End, But——

£250 will be given to the reader of PEARSON'S WEEKLY from whom we receive a Coupon bearing the exact date upon which the

BRITISH FLAG WILL BE OFFICIALLY HOISTED IN PRETORIA.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO.

Fill in the coupon below.
Send it in to us as soon as you like.
Send as many coupons as you like.

If two competitors name the exact day the money will go to the one who gives the correct hour of that day. If two or more give the correct day and hour the £250 in full will go to him whose coupon we received bearing the earliest date of sending in. Pretoria time, which is about an hour and three quarters in advance of English time, must be stated.

The Editor's decision must be final, and competitors must only enter on that understanding.

The Editor reserves the right to close this competition at a day's notice.

Address all envelopes to "War Editor," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Pretoria Coupon, S.S.] *May 19, 1900.*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Day..... *Hour*.....

(Pretoria Time.)

We shall take it that competitors mean the year 1900 unless they state otherwise.

This notice and coupon also appears every week in the ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWS, HOME NOTES, THE SUNDAY READER, PEARSON'S WEEKLY, and the BIG BUDGET.

Readers of SHORT STORIES may enter with this Coupon.

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THE CONVERSION OF NICOLA.

In Jaupierre, which takes its name from the sand-stone quarries embedded in the sloping sides of a little valley by the Moselle, the dust rose in golden clouds from the yellow highway. In the shade of the whitewashed wall before the roomy inn, squatted the musicians, and upon the broad, smooth road—the only bit of ground left uncultivated by the hard-working people—gay, active girls and roguish-eyed boys were dancing a quadrille, forward and back to the quickest time. There was no calling-off, no confusion; no hesitating, uncertain couple spoiled the dance. It was like watching a well-drilled ballet-intertwining figures, gay, fluttering gowns, and supple bodies, bowing and balancing. And upon them all laughed the glowing October sun, the orchards sent out fragrance, and the fine, yellow dust covered the whole landscape with a glittering veil.

Jaupierre was celebrating, for it was the beginning of the village festival in honour of that good saint who, all the year through, takes such good care of the whole village. In every house work was laid aside. The young people hurried to the dance; the old people looked on, or rested at home from the many cares that come with the wine-making and the fruit-gathering.

The blacksmith's house stood in the midst of the village, but the doors and windows were closed and the anvil was silent, for "the Marshall" had wandered out with his wife and daughter into what was, at that time, the Frenchman's paradise—a bare sunny spot outside the town with dusty fruit trees and big vegetable beds; this spot the Frenchman loved to call his "garden."

Upon a rickety bench without a back, in front of a wooden hut for the garden tools, sat "Monsieur," and studied "Little Lorraine," with suppressed invectives against the "cursed Prussians," Madame had enthroned herself upon an overturned oleander tub in the path, and had made fast to the trunk of a young apple tree that netting work, which for some unaccountable reason the women of that province are always doing.

Meanwhile Celestine, the dark-eyed daughter, leaned sulkily against the hedge and picked to pieces the bunch of asters and mignonette which had been stuck into her pretty pink silk sash for a gala decoration. She started nervously when the priest reading his breviary as he strolled along, gave her a friendly greeting, after he had inquiringly scanned her face usually so gay

"Oh, Celeste!" cried the jovial priest, nodding to her, "not at the dance? What is the matter?"

"None of your business!" Celestine would have enjoyed saying, but she held her tongue, while her blushing face drooped before the keeper of her conscience.

"Really, you must confide in St. Joseph," continued the priest laughingly, as he courteously declined Father Audebert's invitation to join them; he thanked Madame for the "Mirabelles de Mez," the little sugary plums she had given him, and said good-bye to the good people for the present.

Without stopping he kept on his way, for his sharp, clever eyes had discovered something toward which he eagerly turned.

But this something—a slim, shock-headed lad—at once disappeared behind a beech thicket toward a foot-path by the side of the road.

"Hello, Nicola!" called the priest, "why are you slinking through the meadow there, and keeping Celeste waiting? Surely you ought to take her to the dance!"

Nicola looked very much ashamed and slowly turned around; but when the priest, still diligently reading in his book, had passed by and disappeared behind a second clump of bushes as he followed the path onward, the lad stood for a time undecided, lazily stretched himself, finally turned back again, and slowly, as before, sauntered along the woody path, sweet with thyme, humming this witty and beautiful song:

Had the good God willed,
My name had been Jerome;
But it seemed best to my ma
To call me Nicola—
Nicola, Nicola—ha! ha! ha!
Nicola.

At last he came to the little chapel, gained its sunny side, and, with a sigh, dropped down where soft, silver-gray weeds covered the warm earth.

Yes, he had intended to go after Celestine—at least, he had made her think so the night before, when he

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lounged about the bright smithy, and watched the flying sparks; but, luckily, he had not told her so in unmistakable words—trust Nicola to look out for that! Promises and obligations are such heavy, heavy burdens! He knew this from many a painful experience. That was why he was called "Lazy Nicola."

Naturally, the evening before, his half promise had not seemed a burden. He was too fond of pretty Celeste for that. To-day, when he loitered past the inn on his way to get his girl, when he felt the heat and the dust, and saw how the bright drops stood on the dancer's forehead, it seemed to him very pleasant to talk with Celeste of a cold winter evening by the blazing fire, or to sit with her on the vineyard terrace in the sunshine of an October morning; but here, to whirl round and round in the sweat of his brow—he really wasn't foolish enough for that; and what pleasure could it be even to her? That her whole body thrilled with impetuous vitality, that her untiring feet ached to dance, and that only too willingly would she have shown her little white-clad person by the side of the handsomest fellow of the village—of all this, lazy, comfort-loving Nicola really had no suspicion.

For Nicola was not only the handsomest lad, but also the richest and best brought-up youngster in the whole neighbourhood, and so used to having the ripe fruit fall into his hand, that it hardly seemed worth while to stretch it out.

Certainly he didn't care to make any unnecessary exertion, as in the present case; and so he basked in the sunshine till he fell asleep, and thus got rid of all troublesome thoughts.

Celeste, in the meantime, still stood by the hedge, and thought about the words of the priest, which she knew very well how to apply. At first she was rather angry. She wrinkled her forehead, and contemptuously turned down the corners of her mouth; then she looked more thoughtful. At last the young girl laughed a little scornfully, murmured something to herself about "stupidity," and declared, turning to her parents, that she would take her godmother some apples. So she filled a basket with the red-cheeked fruit, and slowly walked away. At first she went in the right direction, but suddenly turning back, she followed a narrow path behind the garden toward the bush-bordered road leading to the little chapel.

This chapel is dedicated to St. Joseph, whose image adorns the open, cell-like shrine. Over his shoulders hangs a sheepskin, and he leans upon his staff, while from under his weather-beaten halo his face beams forth peacefully.

He may well look friendly, for the devout who turn to him in trouble are almost always pretty young girls.

St. Joseph of Jaupiere is widely renowned. His especial delight is to help young girls get the right husband. He always grants their requests if such requests are consistent with their temporal success and their eternal welfare.

At all events, he never leaves the petitioner in distressing uncertainty as to her fate, but he announces his intentions in the matter by an unmistakable sign. After silently making a wish the girl takes a stone and throws it upon the roof of the little chapel, and if the stone stays there it foretells with unfailing certainty that her request shall be granted; but if the stone rolls off the saint has a good reason for refusing his help.

For some little time after she had reached the chapel Celeste stood still, glancing now and then at the saint, and thinking scornfully of her lazy lover

A SLANDER ON FAT PEOPLE.

OBESITY IS NOT THE RESULT OF GLUTTONY, BUT A DISEASE.

A SPANISH COUNT REDUCES HIS WEIGHT 34 LB. IN 22 DAYS

BY "RUSSELL'S" TREATMENT.

The "Cork Herald" says: "Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. There has recently been issued a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), and is a cheap issue (only 3d.) published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proof to the English Press. The Editor of the "Tablet," the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more, if required. To assist him to make his remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a Marchioness, writes from Madrid: 'My son, Count———, has reduced his weight in 22 days, 10 kilos—i.e., 34 lb.' Another writes: 'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system), I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady), writes: 'I am just half the size.' A fourth: 'I find it is successful in my case.' I have lost 3 lb. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes: 'A reduction of 18 lb. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth, writes: 'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says: 'It reduced me considerably, not only in body, but all over.' The author is very positive. He says: 'Step on a weighing-machine on Monday morning, and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2 lb. in weight without the slightest harm, and gained vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations'"

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"I won't do it!" she said softly, set her basket down, and folded her arms defiantly. "Certainly not——"

Here some bright, angry tears rose to her eyes.

But the longer she looked at the saint the friendlier he seemed to smile, until at last mischief shone from every wrinkle of his brightly-painted face, as if he'd like to say: "Yes, yes."

At last the young girl whispered, and, as if somebody had forced her down, suddenly she sank upon her knees, raised her hands, and prayed from the bottom of her soul:

"Give him to me, dear St. Joseph—oh, do give him to me," with whatever else her innocent heart prompted.

And such perfect trust came over her that she sprang up with all confidence, laughingly shook the tears from her blushing cheeks, and began to look about for the stone which, it was to be hoped, would prove no disappointment.

But the seekers had already been too numerous. Nowhere about was there a stone fit to throw; and even as far as the hedge the path was as clear of stones as a well-tilled wheat field. The best thing to do was to bring one's own stone.

Celeste wandered away up and down the path, but without success. Then her glance fell upon the basket, and with a smile she bent over, and without stopping to remember the stories past of that fruit, she threw it with all her might upon the chapel roof.

A second she waited with beating heart. Then she breathed more freely, for the apple did not fall back, but rested upon the ridge pole of the little church. She leaned against the door post, folded her arms in her lap, and looked up with thankful heart to the saint, who now showed his usual calm and friendly countenance. Little by little she sank into the loveliest day dreams.

Nicola had not enjoyed sweet slumber long. The sun blistered the whitewashed walls of the chapel and burned fiercely down on him, for in this blessed province, even so late in the year, the sun is still hot enough to make the grapes sweet, and the drinker hot and thirsty. The sleeper began to be troubled by a bad dream, which presently became a frightful nightmare.

He dreamed that he was sweltering in purgatory, and like a forge, the fire was only on one side of him, so that on that side he grew perfectly crisp. Piteously he begged a lively little devil who kept stirring up the fire to let him turn round, but the tiny fiend sniggered derisively and answered that he must keep quiet, that as he was uncommonly fond of comfort now for 10,000 years, he wouldn't need to stir, for there would be plenty of time after that to toast his other side!

But poor Nicola suffered the worst from the thirst which the infernal flames aroused, and sighing sadly looked upward. There he saw above him, floating on the clouds, the garden of paradise. The angels seemed to be gathering in the harvest, for they shook a magnificent apple tree till the fine fruit rolled down on all sides. Nicola eagerly watched for some to fall in his neighbourhood. He called to the angels to take pity on him, but nobody seemed to notice him. Then among all the blonde heads there appeared a dark, roguish face, with Celeste's well-known features. This brunette seraph did not seem blind to the agonies of the sufferer, for just when he believed he should faint away she seized a beautiful, red-cheeked apple and threw it down to Nicola, so that it hit his penitent breast a smart rap. Then his rigid limbs relaxed, he sprang up.

Purgatory and paradise vanished, and the bright autumn sun shone over him. But near him, in the green grass, lay the fruit of paradise. As his thirst had remained he seized the apple, bit into it thoughtfully, but eagerly, and devoured it to the very core.

When he had finished that and had thought a little about his dream, with awful clearness he perceived that his vision might come true. Like a crushing burden the idea settled upon his soul, that he ought to turn over a new leaf, that now he must take hold in earnest, that he, too, must bow before the first law: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." And the future seemed to stretch out before him like a long, dusty road.

Suddenly he remembered the dark-eyed angel, and with heartfelt longing he thought of the shamefully deserted Celeste, the only person who could scatter flowers along that dreary, toilsome path through life he was determined henceforth to travel.

He sprang up more quickly than he had ever done before, and hurried along the chapel to the path. There he saw the lovely girl sitting dreaming on the threshold. When she heard his step and looked up the new spirit in him shone from his eyes and spoke in the pressure of his hand, as, seizing hers, the young fellow asked eagerly:

"Celeste, at the next village festival will you dance with me as my little wife?"

She answered simply:

"Let us thank St. Joseph."

MARIANNE WITTICH.

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CHIVERS'

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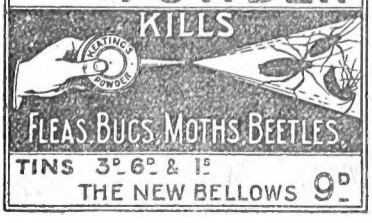

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THE BRAIN GYMNASIUM

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, May 28th, 1900.

No. 118.

When can nineteen be more than twenty?

No. 119.

Subtract 45 from 45 in such a manner that there shall be 45 left.

No. 120.

A draper dividing up a piece of cloth into yard lengths found he cut off one yard per second. The piece of cloth was sixty yards in length. How long did it take him to cut up the whole?

No. 121.

Form a square word with words meaning:

REPOSE
ALWAYS
WITHERED
A PLANT

No. 122.

An uncle with a turn for figures presented his youthful nephew with a box of soldiers, but made it a condition that he should not play with them till he could discover, on arithmetical principles, how many the box contained. He was told that if he placed them three in a row there would be one over; if he placed them four in a row there would be two over; if five in a row, three over; if six in a row, he would have four over. The total number was under 100. How many soldiers did the box contain?

No. 123.

Form the name of an English military commander with the first and third letters of the equivalents of the following:

A COUNTY.
A KNAVE.
FEELING.
TEMPER.
TO ENCIRCLE.
ELEVATION.
TO SHAKE.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 94 to 99.

The prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mr. Oscar Frankenstein, of 1 St. James's Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W., whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

Each of the following has been awarded a copy of "Hagar of Homerton," by H. E. Dudeney:

F. Wey, "Rhianva," Rock Avenue, New Brompton.
Mrs. Henry Fay, 55 Moyne Road, Dublin.
Miss Hettie Scott, 10 Queen's Road, Portsmouth.
E. Hutchings, 4 Kingsgate Street, High Holborn, W.C.
Charles Harwood, 15 Colfe Road, Forest Hill, S.E.
W. Crampton, Glazebrook, Manchester.
H. B. Thompson, Bracknell, Berks.
Miss Maud Hunt, 137 Whitefield Road, Liverpool.
Alfred Hindley, 60 Everton Road, Liverpool.
M. W. Daws, 21 Parliament Street, Hull.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES.

Nos. 100 to 105.

No. 100. When it is the half of five. F *IV* E.

No. 101. If you write stale tales, at least do not steal the slate

No. 102.
S equel.
N eat.
O rder.
W an.
D aft.
O utfit.
N ew.

No. 103. PIPECLAY.

No. 104.
CI G AR.
N O W.
PEA S ANT.
A C E.
MERC H ANTS.
D E N.
AN N UL.

No. 105.
CHAP
HERE
AREA
PEAR

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A smartly cut, tailor-finished Eton Jacket and well-made Skirt, in new design. Price complete, 10/6; The Skirt alone, 5/6. Also supplied in the fashionable Khaki Drill for 13/6; carriage, 6d.

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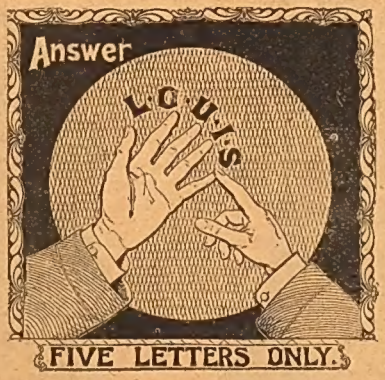

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